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Publications of the Spenser Society.

Issue No. 39.

CERTAYNE EGLOGES

BY

ALEXANDER BARCLAY.

1570.

PRINTED FOR THE SPENSER SOCIETY.

1885.

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LIST OF PUBLICATIONS.

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For the First Year 1867-8.

1. The Proverbs and Epigrams of John Heywood. Reprinted from the Original Edition of 1562.
2. The Works of John Taylor the Water Poet. Reprinted from the Folio Edition of 1630. *Part I.*

For the Second Year 1868-9.

3. The Works of John Taylor the Water Poet. Reprinted from the Folio of 1630. *Part II.*
4. The Works of John Taylor the Water Poet. Reprinted from the Folio of 1630. *Part III.* (*Completing the volume.*)
5. Zepheria. Reprinted from the Original Edition of 1594.

For the Third Year 1869-70.

6. The ΈΚΑΤΟΜΠΑΘΙΑ or Passionate Centurie of Love, by Thomas Watson. Reprinted from the Original Edition of (*circa*) 1581.
7. Works of John Taylor the Water Poet, not included in the Folio Volume of 1630. Reprinted from the Original Editions. *First Collection.*

For the Fourth Year 1870-1.

8. A Handefull of Pleasant Delites, by Clement Robinson, and divers others. Reprinted from the Original Edition of 1584.
9. Juvenilia: Poems by George Wither, contained in the collections of his *Juvenilia* which appeared in 1626 and 1633. *Part I.*
10. Juvenilia: Poems by George Wither. *Part II.*

For the Fifth Year 1871-2.

11. Juvenilia: Poems by George Wither, contained in the collections of his *Juvenilia* which appeared in 1626 and 1633. *Part III.*
12. Miscellaneous Works of George Wither. Reprinted from the Original Editions. *First Collection.*

For the Sixth Year 1872-3.

13. Miscellaneous Works of George Wither. Reprinted from the Original Editions. *Second Collection.*
14. Works of John Taylor the Water Poet, not included in the Folio Volume of 1630. Reprinted from the Original Editions. *Second Collection.*

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Certayne Egloges

OF

Alexander Barclay,

Priest.

Whereof the first three conteyne the miseryes of Courtiers and Courtes of all princes in generall,

Gathered out of a Booke named in Latin,

MISERIÆ CVRIALIVM,

COMPILED BY

Eneas Siluius

Poet and Oratour.

An. Do. 1570.

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CERTAYNE EGLOGES

OF

ALEXANDER BARCLAY,

PRIEST.

REPRINTED FROM THE EDITION OF 1570.

PRINTED FOR THE SPENSER SOCIETY.

1885.

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PRINTED BY CHARLES E. SIMMS,
MANCHESTER.

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Certayne Egloges

of Alexander Barclay Prieſt,

Whereof the firſt three conteyne the miſeryes

of Courtiers and Courtes of all princes in generall,

Gathered out of a booke named in Latin,

MISERIÆ CVRIALIVM, compiled

by Eneas Siluius Poet and

Oratour.

¶ The Prologe.

The famous Poetes with the Muſes nine
With wit inſpired, freth, pregnant and diuine,
Say, boldly indite in ſtile ſubſtanciall:
Some in Poemes hye and heroicall,
Some them delite in heauy Tragedies,
And ſome in wanton or mery Comedies.
Some in Satyres againſt vices dare carpe,
Some in ſweete ſonges accordant with the harpe.
And eche of theſe all had laude and excellence
After their reaſon and ſtile of eloquence.
Who in fayre ſpeeche could briefly comprehende
Moſte fruitfull matter, men did him moſte commende.
And who were fruitleſſe, and in ſpeeche ſuperflue,
Men by their writing ſcantly ſet a qu.
Therefore wiſe Poetes to sharpe and proue their wit,
In homely ieſtes wrote many a mery fit.
Before they durſt be of audacitie
Tauenture thinges of weyght and grauitie.
In this ſaide maner the famous Theocrite
Firſt in Siracuſe attempted for to write
Certayne Egloges or ſpeeches paſtorall,
Inducing Shepherdes, men homely and rurall.
Which in playne language, according to their name,
Had ſundry talking, ſometime of mirth and game,
Sometime of thinges more like to grauitie,
And not exceeding their ſmall capacitie.
Moſte noble Virgill after him longe while
Wrote alſo Egloges after like maner ſtile.
His wittes prouing in matters paſtorall,
Or he durſt venture to ſtile heroicall.
And in like maner nowe lately in our dayes
Hath other Poetes attempted the ſame wayes:
As the moſte famous Baptiſt Mantuan
The beſt of that ſort ſince Poetes firſt began.
And Frauncis Petrarke alſo in Italy
In like maner ſtile wrote playne and meryly.
What ſhall I ſpeake of the father auncient,
Which in briefe language both playne and eloquent,
Betwene Alathea, Sewſtis ſtoute and bolde
Hath made rehearſall of all thy ſtoryes olde,
By true hiſtoryes vs teaching to obiect
Againſt vayne fables of olde Gentiles ſect.
Beſide all theſe yet finde I many mo
Which haue employed their diligence alſo,
Betwene Shepherdes, as it were but a fable,
To write of matters both true and profitable.
But all their names I purpoſe not to write,
Which in this maner made bookes infinite.
Nowe to my purpoſe, their workes worthy fame
Did in my yonge age my heart greatly inflame.
Dull ſlouth eſchewing, my ſelfe to exerciſe
In ſuch ſmall matters, or I durſt enterpriſe
To hyer matter, like as theſe children do,
Which firſt vſe to creepe, and afterwarde to go.
The birde vnuſed firſt flying from her neſt
Dare not aduenture, and is not bolde nor preſt
With winges abroade to flye as doth the olde,
For vſe and cuſtome cauſeth all thing be bolde:
And little cunning by craft and exerciſe
To perfect ſcience cauſeth a man to riſe.
But or the Paynter can ſure his craft attayne,
Much froward faſhion frankſourmeth he in vayne.
But raſing ſuperflue, and adding that doth want,
Rude picture is made both perfect and pleaſant.
So where I in youth a certayne worke began,
And not concluded, as oft doth many a man:
Yet thought I after to make the ſame perfite,
But long I miſſed that which I firſt did write.
But here a wonder, I forſie yere ſaue twayne
Proceeded in age, founde my firſt youth agayne.
To finde youth in age is a probleme difficile,
But nowe heare the truth, and then no longer caule.
As I late turned olde bookes to and fro,
One litle treatiſe I founde among the mo:
Becauſe that in youth I did compile the ſame,
Egloges of youth I did call it by name.
And ſeing ſome men haue in the ſame delite,
At their great inſtance I made the ſame perfite.
Adding and bating where I perceyued neede,
All them deſiring which ſhall this treatiſe rede,
Not to be grieued with any playne ſentence
Rudely conuayed for lacke of eloquence.
It were not fitting a heard or man rurall
To ſpeake in termes gay and rhetorical.
So teacheth Horace in arte of poetry,
That writers namely their reaſon ſhould apply
Mete ſpeeche appropring to euery perſonage,
After his eſtate, behauour, wit and age.
But if that any would nowe to me obiect
That this my labour ſhall be of ſmall effect,
And to the Reader not greatly profitable,
And by that maner as vayne and reprouable,
Becauſe it maketh onely relation
Of Shepherdes maner and diſputation.
If any ſuche reade my treatiſe to the ende
He ſhall well perceyue, if he thereto intende,
That it conteyneth both laudes of vertue,
And man inſourmeth miſliuing to eſchue,
With diuers bourdes and ſentences morall,
Cloſed in ſhadowe of ſpeeches paſtorall,
As many Poetes (as I haue ſayde before)
Haue vſed longe time before that I was borne.
But of their writing though I enſue the rate,
No name I chalenge of Poete laureate.

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The Prologe to the Reader.

That name vnto them is mete and doth agree
Which writeth matters with curiositee.
Mine habite blacke accordeth not with grene,
Blacke betokeneth death as it is dayly sene,
The grene is pleasour, freshe lust and solite,
These two in nature hath great diuersitie.
Then who would ascribe, except he were a foole,
The pleasaunt laurer vnto the mourning cowle.
Another rewarde abideth my labour,
The glorious sight of God my sauiour,
Which is chiefe shepheard and head of other all,
To him for succour in this my worke I call,
And not on Clio nor olde Melpomene,
My hope is fixed of him ayded to be
For to accomplishe my purpose and entent
To laude and pleasour of God omnipotent,
And to the profite, the pleasour and the mede,
Of all them which shall this treatise here and rede.
But to the Reader nowe to returne agayne,
First of this thing I will thou be certayne,
That fiue Egloges this whole treatise doth holde,
To imitation of other Poetes olde.
In whiche Egloges shepheardes thou mayst see
In homely language not passing their degree,
Sometime disputing of courtly misery,
Sometime of Uenus discreatfull tiranny.
Sometime commending loue honest and laudable,
Sometime despising loue falle and deceyuable,
Sometime despising and blaming auarise,
Sometime exciting vertue to exercise,
Sometime of warre abhorring the outrage,
And of the same time the manifolde damage,
And other matters, as after shall appeare
To their great pleasure which shal them rede or heare.

The Argument of the first Egloge.

TWo simple shepheardes met on a certayne day,
The one well aged with lockes hore and gray,
Which after labours and worldly busines
Concluded to liue in rest and quietnes.
Yet nought had he kept to finde him cloth nor fode,
At diuers holes his heare grewe through his hode,
A stiffe patched felt hanging ouer his eyne,
His costly clothing was threedebare kendall grene,
His patched cockers skant reached to his knee,
In the side of his kelte there stacke a spone of tree,
A botle his cote on the one side had torne,
For hanging the eare was nere a sunder worne.
In his owne hande alway his pipe he bare,
Wherof the sound him released of his care,
His wallet with bread and chese, so then he stood
(A hooke in his hande) in the middest of his good.
Saue that he bosted to haue experience
Of worldly thinges, by practise and science,
Him selfe he called Cornix by his name.
The other shepheard was like vnto the same,
Saue one that he had liued all his dayes
In keping his flocke, and sene no farther wayes.
Yet was he to sight a stoute and lustie freake,
And as he bosted he borne was in the peake.
Coridon by name his neighbours did him call,
Him selfe counted the stoutest of them all.
This Coridon sware and saide to Cornix sure
That he no longer would there that life endure
In wretched labour and still in pouertie,
But to the Citie he saide that he would hye,
Or els to the Court, and there with some abide
Till time that fortune would better life prouide.
By which motion Cornix sheweth playnly
Of Court and Courtiers the care and misery.

The first Egloge of the miseries and

maners of the Court and Courtiers.

¶ *Coridon first speaketh.*

FOr looth frende Cornix nought can my heart make light
When I remember the stormes of yester night,
The thunder & lightning, the tẽpest & the hayle
Hath playnely wasted our profite and auayle,
The fearefull thunder with greeuous clap and sounde
Our Corne hath beaten downe flat vnto the grounde,
With tempest after and violence of rayne
That it as I doubt shall neuer rise agayne.
The hayle hath beaten our shepe within the folde,
That all be feebled alwell the yong as olde,
Our milke is turned and waxen pale and soure,
The storme and tempest vpon our couches poure,
Our flocke and fieldes is all our whole riches,
Which still is subiect to suche vnhappines:
For after that we haue done both cost and payne,
One sodeyn tempest destroyeth all agayne.
Then farewel welfare, worse chance we dede not feare
Saue onely to sucke our clawes with the Beare.
The Citizens haue great treasour likerly
In cofers closed auoyde of ieopardie,
Their coynes couched fast vnder locke and key,
From place to place they may the same conuay
When they of the theues perceiue the din and sounde:
But still must our corne remayne vpon the grounde,
Abiding stormes, hayle, thunder and tempest,
Till that it be for sickle ripe and prest.
As for their riches no thunder, frost nor hayle,
No storme nor tempest can hurt or disauayle.
Suche carefull chaunces and such aduersitie
Us alway kepeth in wretched pouertie.

Cornix answereth.

O Coridon my mate I sweare so haue I blis,
Thou playnly speakest like as the matter is,
But as for my parte my minde and wit is blinde
To knowe who gideth all wether storme and winde,
But this thing I knowe, but yet not parfitely,
Yet bolde dare I be to speake to thee playnly,
For if that I spake it in some audience
Some men would maligne and take it for offence,
If God (as men say) doth heauen and earth sustayne,
Then why doth not he regarde our dayly payne?
Our greeuous labour he iustly might deuide,
And for vs wretches some better life prouide.
Some nought doth labour and liueth pleasauntly,
Though all his reason to vices he apply:
But see with what sweat, what busines and payne

Our

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Our ſimple liuing we labour to obtayne:
Beholde what illes the ſhepheardes muſt endure
For flocke and houſholde bare liuing to procure,
In feruent heate we muſte intende our folde,
And in the winter almoſt we freſe for colde:
Upon the harde ground or on the flintes browne
We ſlepe, when other lye on a bed of downe.
A thouſande illes of daunger and ſickneſſe,
With diuers ſores our beaſtes doth oppreſſe:
A thouſande perils and mo if they were tolde
Dayly and nightly inuadeth our poore folde.
Sometime the wolfe our beaſtes doth deuour,
And ſometime the theefe awayteth for his hour:
Or els the ſouldiour much worſe then wolfe or theefe
Againſt all our flocke inrageth with miſcheefe.
See howe my handes are with many a gall,
And ſtiffe as a borde by worke continuall,
My face all ſcorpy, my colour pale and wan,
My head all parched and blacke as any pan,
My beard like briſtles, ſo that a pliant leeke
With a little helpe may thruſt me throw the cheeke,
And as a ſtockfiſhe wrinkled is my ſkinne,
Suche is the profite that I by labour winne.
But this my labour ſhould greue me much the leſſe
If reſt or pleaſure came of my buſineſſe:
But one ſodayne ſtorme of thunder, hayle or rayne,
Againe all waſteth wherfore I take this payne.
This is the rewarde, the dede and worke diuine,
Unto whoſe aulters poore ſhepheardes incline:
To offer tapers and candles we are fayne,
And for our offering, lo, this we haue againe.
I can not declare what pitie and mercy
Wrappeth vs wretches in this harde miſery,
But this wot I will, it is both right and mede,
There moſte to ſuccour where doth appeare moſt nede.

Coridon

Ho there frende Cornix, thou wadeſt nowe to farre,
Thy ſelfe forgetting thou leapeſt ouer the barre:
Smal is my knowledge, thou many a thing haſt ſene,
Yet out of the way forſoth I ſee thee clene.
The king of heauen is mercifull and iuſt,
And them all helpeth which put in him their truſt:
When we deſerue he ſtriketh not alway,
This in the pulpit I heart lyr Peter ſay,
Yet ofte he ſtriketh when man is obſtinate,
And by no meanes will his milliuing hate:
So all theſe plages and inconuenience
Fales on vs wretches onely for our offence.

Cornix

For what offence? thou art mad ſo to ſay,
Were we of that ſorte which did our Lorde betray,
Or that conſented our Lorde to crucify?
We neuer were ſuche thy ſelfe can teſtifie.

Coridon

Nowe truſt me truly though thou be neuer ſo wroth,
I nought ſhall abaſhe to thee to ſay the troth:
Though we ſhepheardes be out of company,
Without occaſion we liue vnhappely,
Seke well among vs and playnly thou ſhalt ſee
Theft, brauling, malice, diſcorde, iniquitie,
Wrath, lechery, leaſing, enuy and couetiſe,
And briefly to ſpeake, truely we want no vice.

Cornix

What, nay man pardie all we do not offence,
Yet all haue ſorowe without all difference,
Say nought man but truth, do God nothing deſerue
Without difference, yet be all like to ſterue.

Coridon

What ceaſſe man for ſhame thou art of reaſon ſcant,
The wiſe nowe muſt learne wit of the ignoraunt:
I haue no knowledge ſaue onely of my tarre,
Yet this I perceaue, man ſhould not ſeke to farre
In Gods worke, he all doth for the beſt.
If thou findeſt here no eaſement, wealth ne reſt,
What then, ſeke farther, for playnely ſo ſhall I,
In ſome place fortune beholdeth merily.
I bide no longer by ſaint Thomas of Kent
In ſuche bare places where euery day is Lent,
The Frers haue ſtore euery day of the weke,
But euery day our meat is for to ſeke.
I nought haue to bye, begge can I not for ſhame
Except that I were blinde, impotent or lame:
If ſuche a gadling as I ſhould begge or craue
Of me ſuche mercy and pitie would men haue,
That they for almes (I ſweare by Gods lockes)
In euery towne would make me ſcoure the ſtockes:
That can one Dyome by many allayes tell,
With that ill ſcience I purpoſe not to mell,
Here nothing I haue wherfore I nede to care,
Nowe Cornix adue ſtreight forwarde will I fare.

Cornix

Streight forwarde man, hei Benedicite,
All other people haue as great care as we,
Onely bare nede is all our payne and wo,
But theſe Towne dwellers haue many paynes mo,
Our payne is pleaſour nere in compariſon
Of their great illes and ſore vexation.
Of all ſuche thinges haue I experience,
Then mayſt thou ſurely geue to me credence:
Whither wilt thou go to liue more quietly?
Man all the worlde is full of miſery.

Coridon

What man, the court is freſhe and full of eaſe,
I can drawe a bowe, I ſhall ſome lorde there pleaſe,
Thy ſelfe can report howe I can birdes kill,
Mine arowe toucheth of them nothing but the bill,
I hurte no fleſhe, nor bruſe no parte at all,
Were not my ſhoting our liuing were but ſmall:
Lo here a ſparowe, lo here be thruſhes four,
All theſe I killed this day within an hour.
I can daunce the raye, I can both pipe and ſing,
If I were mery I can both hurle and fling,
I runne, I wraſtle, I can well throwe the barre,
No ſhepheard throweth the axeltrie ſo farre,
If I were mery I could well leape and ſpring,
I were a man mete to ſerue a prince or king.
Wherfore to the Court nowe will I get me playne,
Adue ſwete Cornix, farewell yet once agayne,
Prouide for thy ſelfe, ſo ſhall I do for me.

Cornix

Do way Coridon, for Gods loue let be,
Nought els is the Court but euen the deuils mouth,
And place moſt carefull of Eaſt, weſt, north & ſouth:
For thy longe ſeruice there nede ſhall be thy hyre,
Out of the water thou leapeſt into the fyre,
We liue in ſorowe I will it not deny,
But in the Court is the well of miſery.

Coridon

What man, thou ſeeſt, and in likewiſe ſee I,
That luſty courtiers go alway iolily,
They haue no labour yet are they wel beſene,
Barded and garded in pleaſaunt white and grene,
They do nought els but reuell, ſlepe and drinke,
But on his foldes the poore ſhepheard muſte thinke.

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They reſt, we labour, they gayly decked be
Whyle we go ragged in nede and pouertie,
Their colour luſtie, they byde no ſtorme nor ſhours,
They haue the pleaſoures, but all the paynes are ours,
They haue all thinges, but we wretches haue nought,
They ſing, they daunce, whyle we ſore ſigh for thought.
But what bringeth them to this proſperitie,
Strength, courage, frendes, craſte and audacitie.
If I had frendes I haue all thing beſide,
Which might in court a rowme for me prouide.
But ſith courtiers haue this like continually,
They haue all pleaſour and nought of miſery.

Cornix.

Not ſo Coridon, oft vnder yelowe lockes
Be hid foule ſcabbes and fearefull French pockes,
Their reuiled thirtes of cloth white, ſoft and thin
Ofte time cloketh a foule and ſcorny ſkin.
And where we labour in worckes profitable,
They labour rather in worcke abhominable.
They may haue ſhame to ſet ſo vp and downe
When they be debtours for dublet, hoſe and gowne,
And in the tauerne remayne they laſt for lag,
When neuer a crolle is in their courtly bag.
They crake, they boaſte, and vaunt as they were wood,
And moſte when they ſit in midſt of others good.
Nought haue they fooles but care and miſery,
Who hath it proued all courting ſhall deſy.

Coridon.

Mary ſyr by this I ſee by experience
That thou in the Court haſt kept ſome reſidence.

Cornix.

Remembring of court the payne continuall
I thinke theſe paynes but eaſy, ſhort and ſmall:
So the remembraunce of greeuous care and payne
Cauſeth me gladly this hardnes to ſuſtayne.
Who that hath liued in court I thee aſſure,
In ſtede of pleaſour may this our life endure.
Our nede is eaſed with pleaſaunt libertie,
There care is heaped with harde captiuitie,
I thought our liuing care and veration
Before of the court or thou made mention.

Coridon.

If the court be ſuche as thou doſt playnly tell
I thinke it folly with it to deale or mell,
Better is free will with nede and pouertie
Then in the court with harde captiuitie:
But tell me Cornix I pray thee inſtantly,
Howe knoweſt thou firſt this geare ſo perfitely.

Cornix.

Whyle I in youth in Croidon towne did dwell
Often to the court I coles brought to ſell,
And then I learned and noted parfitely
Of court and courtiers the care and miſery.
For I lurked and none regarded me,
Till I had knowledge of hye and lowe degree,
What was their maner, behauour and vſage,
The more I taried more awe I of outrage.

Coridon

Then farewell courting, I ſee thou counſeſt beſt
Here to remayne in ſimple welth and reſt,
But in the meane ſeaſon I pray thee hartily
Declare me all whole the courtly miſery.
Beholde our wethers lye chewing of the cud,
Here is no peryll of water dike nor mud,
Slouth louerly ſlombring, muche ſlepe is reprouable,
But mery talking is greatly comfortable.
Here is colde ſhadowe, here is a cleare fountayne,
When wordes greueth drinke and begin agayne,
For longe time paſſed I haue heard of thy lore,
Which thing me moueth to heare thee talke the more.
Begin and ſhewe me the courtes wretchednelle,
So I perchaunce ſhall ſet therby the leſſe:
And where longe talking oft greueth many a man,
I ſhall thee furniſhe with wordes nowe and then.
What ſay on Cornix, why art thou nowe ſo ſtill?
Thy wit and reaſon was wont to be at will.

Cornix.

Fayne would I common for pleaſour and paſtime,
But truth is counted moſt greeuous fault and crime,
And ſome might me heare which by their wordes ſoure
Might bring me in court to greeuous diſpleaſoure,
Becauſe I ſhall proue all them that court doth haunt
Miſerable fooles, mad men and ignoraunt.
Therefore Coridon among the bowes pype
If there lurke any Jay, Sterling, Thruſh or Pye
To note my wordes, and chat them forth agayne,
Wherby I might winne diſpleaſour, loſſe or payne.

Coridon

Loſſe, Gods dominus, to loſe thou haſte no good,
Saue hooke and cokers, thy bottle and thy hood,
Thy hood all ragged can kepe no body dry,
Many hath as good, though none can them eſpye:
He hath ſmall reaſon that hath a hood more fine,
And would for malice berob thee here of thine,
As for diſpleaſour I warrant thee alſo.
Thou ſhalt for princes great eaſe and pleaſour do,
For many vpon them do dayly craue and call
To be in ſeruice, which are not mete at all:
To be in the court they labour ſo gladly
Becauſe they knowe not therof the miſery.
Whom to receiue it is not profitable,
And to deſpiſe them it is not honorable.
If thou ſuche conſtrayne to leaue of their own minde,
Thou doeſt to princes a very pleaſour kinde,
And other fooles ſhall take thy tale in ſporte,
And neuertheleſſe ſhall to the court reſorte.
Than let not Cornix, playnly to ſay the troth,
Let ſcabbed clawe, and gyly men be wroth,
Better is for truth ſuffer paynes harde,
Then for falſe flattering to haue a great rewarde.

Cornix

Thou ſaieſt but reaſon, I laude thee by ſaint John,
Then boldly demaunde I pray thee Coridon
Of ſuche matters as to the court belonge,
And I ſhall anſwere, dene if it be wrong
That I haue learned by practiſe and ſcience,
I ſhall as I may geue thee intelligence.

Coridon

The court as thou ſayeſt is falſe and deceyuable,
Then tell me wherfore that men moſt honorable
Therin remayning abideth care and payne,
And yet by their will they will not forth agayne.

Cornix

Many thinges be which moueth people blinde
To ren to the court with feruent heart and minde,
But of all thinges this ſpecially is one,
The hope of honour called ambition.
Right ſo Minaicas did luſte of honour call,
And as he counted, ambition is egall
Unto that vertue which men call charitie.
Charitie ſuffreth all harde aduerſitie,
All payne and labour, and all veration:
And euen as muche ſuffreth ambition,

For

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For worldly wretches in honour to excell
Force not to labour downe to the pit of hell,
Lo here chiefe cause why men to court resorte,
But once in the court when they haue had comfort,
Suche is of mankinde the blinde calamitie,
That in one state if they longe time haue be,
A life there liuing but vile and full of shame,
Yet by no meane can they despise the same.
So who that in youth hath vled courtes rage,
They finde no meane to leaue the same in age,
And to win laudes and prayse of the commontie
In no harde labour thinke they difficultie:
But if men hunted for God and hye glory,
As they hunt dayly for honour transitory,
Right fewe or none would to the court apply,
There to be tangled with care and misery.
But to the court if thou hast thine intent
Because Prelates and wise men it frequent,
Heare what the shephearde of Nazareth doth say,
As I heard Faustus declare vpon a day:
Upon the hye chayre and seat of Moyses
Sitte the olde Scribes and sect of Pharises,
Liue as they teach, but liue not as they do.
And thus in the court man must behaue him so.
His life reformyng like as suche ought to liue,
Not by example which they to other giue.

Coridon

These be hye matters and farre beyonde my wit,
If suche be the court what man should mel with it?
Yet I assure thee before this I haue sene
That worthy shepheardes long in the court haue bene.

Cornix

All that I graunt thee, but aske and thou shalt finde
That suche in the court abode agaynst their mind,
As the riche shepheard which woned in Mortlake.

Coridon

O Cornix, Cornix, fele howe my hart doth quake,
On him when I thinke my heart is full of payne,
Would God that we could get him to liue agayne.
What time he liued some did him blame iwis,
Which since he died do him sore lacke and mis.
He palled Codrus, he palled Minalcas,
He palled Mopsus and also Lilidas,
None other shepheard might with that man compare,
In during his life we neded not to care,
But euer sith time that he was dead and gone
We suffer wrongs, defender haue we none,
He was the patron of thinges pastorall,
His face and fauour forget I neuer shall.
Whyle I was yong he came vnto our cotage,
Then was my father Amintas farre in age,
But the same shepheard gaue him both cloth and golde,
O Cornix, the yong be much vnlike the olde.

Cornix

Yes since his dayes a cocke was in the fen,
I knowe his voyce among a thousande men,
He taught, he preached, he mended euery wrong,
But Coridon alas no good thing bideth long.
He all was a cocke, he wakened vs from slepe,
And while we slumbred he did our foldes kepe,
No cur, no foxes, nor butchers dogges wood
Coulde hurte our fouldes, his watching was so good,
The hungry wolues which that time did abounde
What time he crowed abashed at the sounde.
This cocke was no more abashed of the fore
Then is a lion abashed of an ore.
When he went faded the floure of all the fen,
I boldly dare sweare this cocke trode neuer hen.
This was a father of thinges pastorall,
And that well sheweth his Church cathedrall.
There was I lately about the middest of May,
Coridon his Church is twenty sith more gay
Then all the Churches betwene the same and Kent,
There sawe I his tome and Chapell excellent.
I thought fiue houres but euen a little while,
Saint John the virgin me thought did on me smile,
Our parishe Church is but a dongeon
To that gay Churche in comparison.
If the people were as pleasaunt as the place
Then were it paradise of pleasour and solace,
Then might I truely right well finde in my heart
There still to abide and neuer to departe.
But since that this cocke by death hath left his song
Trust me Coridon there many a thing is wrong,
When I sawe his figure lye in the Chapell side,
Like death for weping I might no longer bide.
Lo all good thinges so sone away doth glide,
That no man liketh to long doth rest and abide.
When the good is gone (my mate this is the case)
Seldome the better reentreth in the place.

Coridon

Thou saiest truth Cornix I make to God auowe,
But hay mate Cornix see where be we nowe?
Farre from the matter where we first began,
Begin where we left I pray thee if thou can.

Cornix

That shall I lightly: thou saydest that a sorte
Of good olde shepheardes did to the court resorte,
But suche as be good be there agaynst their will,
For truely in court they finde lesse good then ill,
To see muche amis to them it is great payne,
When for their wordes none will his vice refrayne,
Then get they but scorne and indignation,
And for their good mindes payne and vexation.

Coridon

I pray thee Cornix procede, tell by and by.

Cornix

Of court and courtiers the payne and misery?
That were a longe matter and very harde to do.

Coridon

This is best remedy, take longer time therto.
Here is a pleasaunt shadowe, here is a pleasaunt coole,
Take banke and floures for cushen and for stoole.

Cornix

Then lay downe thy hooke, geue me the bottle nere,
With often washing the throte and voyce is clere.

Coridon

Lo here the bottle, drinke suche as is therein,
Drinke better, and then in the name of God begin,

Cornix.

A lyr well drawen, and that with little payne,
Then turne we out speche vnto the court agayne.
Who will to the court first let him thinke before
Whether he may suffer labour and paynes sore,
Both hunger and thirst, iniury and wrong,
For these shall he finde the rude courtiers among:
And more after these, yet let him thinke agayne
Whether in the court he may that thing obtayne
Which he desireth, me thinke the contrary,
Men would finde honour, there finde they misery.
Thus all be fooles which willingly there dwell,
Coridon the court is the baytyng place of hell.

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Coridon

That is hardly laide man, by the roode of rest.

Cornix

I graunt it is harde, but to say truth is best,
But yet shall I proue my saying veritable,
Aduert my wordes, see if I be culpable.
Unto our purpose: by diuers wayes three
Men may be fooles, I shall them count to thee:
They all be fooles which set their thought and minde
That thing for to seke which they shall neuer finde.
And they be fooles which seke thing with delite,
Which if they finde is harme and no profite.
And he is a foole, a sotte, and a geke also,
Which choseth a place vnto the same to go,
And where diuers wayes lead thither directly
He choseth the worst and most of ieopardie:
As if diuers wayes laye vnto Illington,
To Stow on the Wold, Quaueneth or Trompington,
To Douer, Durham, to Barwike or Exeter,
To Grantham, Totnes, Bristow or good Manchester
To Roan, Paris, to Lions or Floraunce.

Coridon.

(What ho man abide, what already in Fraunce.
Lo, a fayre iourney and shortly ended to,
With all these townes what thing haue we to do?

Cornix

By God man knowe thou that I haue had to do
In all these townes and yet in many mo,
To see the worlde in youth me thought was best,
And after in age to geue my selfe to rest.

Coridon.

Thou might haue brought one and set by our billage.

Cornix.

What man I might not for lacke of cariage.
To cary mine owne selfe was all that euer I might,
And sometime for ease my sachell made I light.

Coridon

To our first matter we better must entende,
Els in twelue monthes we scant shall make an ende.

Cornix.

True laide, Coridon, that can I not deny,
But thine owne selfe did leade me from the way.
Unto these townes nowe to returne agayne,)
To any of them all if there lay wayes twayne,
The one sure and short and leading directly,
The other way longer and full of ieopardie,
That foole were worth a bable and a hood,
Which would chose the worst, perceiuing wel the good.
One of these follies or all oppresse that sorte
Which not constrayned vnto the court resorte,
Eyther that they search which they may not attayne,
Or that which gotten shall do them hurt and payne,
Or of two wayes they vse to leaue the best,
For on no goodnes doth their desires rest.

Coridon

What is the desire and purpose principall,
Chiefly frequented among these Courtiers all,
And for what rewarde take they suche business.

Cornix.

Of that coulde Codrus the truth to expresse,
And I shall tell thee as true as the Gospell,
After like maner as I heard Codrus tell.

Who that remayne by king or princes side
Endure great paynes fine thinges to prouide,
Who that in court may one of them purchase
Thinketh to haue wonne a pleasaunt gift of grace.
The first is honour, I tolde thee of this same,
The seconde is laude, hye name or worldly fame,
The thirde is power might or authoritie,
The fourth is riches chiefe roote of dignitie,
The fifte is pleasour, lust and voluptuousnes,
For these do men sue vnto the court doubtles.
Beside these be some, but they be sowen thin,
Resorting to court there soules for to win,
So muche more merit supposing to obtayne,
Howe muche more they bide of displeasour & payne,
Of these all shall be my communication.

Coridon

Nowe speake on Cornix with Gods benison.

Cornix

All these shall I proue by playne experience
Not onely witles and voyde of sapience,
But also fooles, men ignorant and wood,
And of all fooles moste worthy of a hood.
But or I begin I take thee to witnes,
That no prince I blame deliting in goodnes:
But onely to speake by protestation,
To say nought but truth is no detraction.
Agaynst our soueraigne nothing do I reply,
In whom all vertue doth spring abundantly:
And other princes and lordes great or small,
While they flee vices I blame none of them all.
And though in talking often times call I must
Some princes subiect to folly, sinne, and lust,
I would not haue that ascribed to them all.
I am not so fonde, so dull nor rusticall,
But that I perceyue that many princes be,
Whole like and vertue is after their degree,
With feare of God and dread of payne doubtles
They slake those vices which riseth on nobles.
And where ofte vices spring moste in hye degree,
By men of riches, wealth, lust and libertie,
Because that no man dare blame them for offence,
Yet some noble men so side them by prudence,
Namely assisted by the supernall grace,
So that wit ruleth and lustes haue no place.
Among Gentiles suche princes finde I can,
As Augustus, Titus, and eke Uespasian,
Traian, Antonius with many other mo,
And Christen princes many one also,
As rich Constantine and olde Archadius,
Theodocius, Charles, and Honorius,
Yea and holy Henry lying at Windesore,
Of suche could I count mo then a twentie score.
Beside noble Henry which nowe departed late,
Spectacle of vertue to euery hye estate,
The patrone of peace and primate of prudence,
Which on Gods Church hath done so great expence,
Of all these princes the mercy and pitie,
The loue of concorde, iustice and equitie,
The pureness of life and giftes liberall,
Not selfe vertuous then the said princes all.
And Henry the eyght moste hye and triumphant,
No gifte of vertue nor manlines doth want,
Mine humble speech and language pastorall
If it were able should write his actes all:
But while I ought speake of courtly misery,
Him with all suche I except vtterly.
But what other princes commonly frequent
As true as I can to shewe is mine intent,
But if I should say that all the misery,
Which I shall after rehearse and specify,

Were

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Were in the court of our moſte noble kinge,
I ſhould layle truth, and playnly make leaſing,
And if that I layde that in it were no vice,
So ſhould I lye, in like maner wiſe.
As for my part, I blame no man at all,
Saue ſuch as to vice be ſubiect, bounde and thrall.
For among all men this wiſe ſtanderh the caſe,
That more ill then good doth growe in euery place.

Coridon

Right well excuſed, I thought not erſt ſithene,
That ſimple Cornix had halſe this ſubtiltie.
But nowe appereth the very truth certayne,
That men of worſhip haue not beſt wit and brayne.
Nowe tell howe Courtiers which gape for honour,
In ſtede of honour finde paynes ſharpe and ſour.

Cornix.

All they which ſuffer in court labour and payne,
Thereby ſuppoſing true honour to obtayne,
It much abuſeth, my wordes nor doctrine
Be much vnable to geue them medicine.
For Elebor the olde with all his ſalues pure
Their wilfull foly could ſcantly helpe and cure.
What man would thinke that true honour profounde
In princes halles or courtes may be founde.
There none hath honour by vertue and cunning,
By maners, wiſedome, gadnes nor good liuing.
But who hath power, hye rowmes or riches,
He hath moſte honour and laude of more and leſſe.
For what poore man, a playne and ſimple ſoule,
Though he were holy as euer was Saint Powle,
Haſte thou euer ſeene exalted of a king
For all his maners and vertuous liuing.
Theſe be the wordes of Shepherde Stiuius,
Which after was pope, and called was Pius.

Coridon.

What yes man perdie right many haue bene ſene,
Which in poore houſes borne and brought vp haue bene,
That from lowe rowmes and carefull pouertie
Be nowe exalted to greateſt dignitie.

Cornix

Such is the pleaſure of princes, to promote
Such vnto honour, which ſcant be worth a grote.
But whom promote they? geue credence vnto me,
Such as in maners to them moſte likeſt be,
And in what maners? in beaſtly lechery,
In couetiſe, ire, or in vile gluttony,
In hatie murther and other crueltie:
Beleue me Coridon, I ſay but veritie.
A couetous prince hath him moſte acceptable,
Which gathereth coyne by meanes diſceyuable:
As falſe accuſing, and wrong extortion,
Selling of Juſtice, fraude and oppreſſion,
A lecherous prince hath him beſt in conceyte,
Which can by crafres his place and time beſt wayt,
Virgins and wiues moſte fayre and amiable
To bring to his bed for luſt abhominable.
And a dronken prince hath him as dereſt mate,
Which moſte can furfet, moſte reuell and drinke late.
And vnto a prince which loueth crueltie,
Chiefely in fauour and conceyte is he,
Which moſte deliteth in ſheding mans bloud,
Fewe vicious princes promote ſuch as be good.
Nowe is accepted of men of hye degree,
Nor let in honour from humble pouertie.
Except he done ſome dede ſo great of fame,
That all the world may wonder at the ſame.
But this ſame honour to neither true nor ſtable,
Which groweth of roote ſo ill and deteſtable.
For very honour, and true or perfect glory
Commeth of actes of laudable memory:
In ſupportation of right and equitie,
Or in defending the Church and commontie.
Or other actes common or priuate
Which ſound to worſhip, theſe make a true eſtate.
But ſuch true honour fewe princes do deſerue,
And no more do they which in the court them ſerue:
Sith all almoſte be of miſgouernaunce,
For no good do they except it be by chaunce.

Coridon.

Yet at the leaſt way ſuch men reputed be
Men of great honour amonge the commontie:
For while ſuch walke in court or in ſtrete,
Eche man inclineth which them doth ſee or mete.
Off goeth the bonet, a becke at euery worde,
Eche man muſt needes geue place vnto my Lorde.
After his degree, birth or promotion,
Suche of the commons haue ſalutation.
And ſhortly to ſay, men do them more honour,
Then to the figure of Chriſt our Sauiour.

Cornix

It is as thou ſayeſt forſooth my Coridon,
But harke what they ſay at laſt when men be gone,
Then they ſalute them in the deuils name,
And pray vnto God that they may dye with ſhame.
And ſo doth many by torment and dolour
When fickle fortune liketh on them to loure.
But ſuch as do ſtoupe to them before their face
Geueth them a mocke when they be out of place:
And one doth whiſper ſoft in anothers eare,
And ſayth, this tiran is keller then a bere.

Coridon

Why, and feare they no more for to ſay thus.

Cornix

No, but harke man what ſayth the good pope Siluius
Lo, this ſame is he which by his bad councell
Cauſeth our prince to be to vs to fell.
This ſame is he which rayſeth deme and taxe,
This ſame is he which ſtrayned men on rackes.
This ſame is he which cauſeth all this warre,
This ſame is he which all our wealth doth marre.
This is of Commons the very deadly mall,
Which with theſe charges thus doth oppreſſe vs all.
Who him diſpleaſeth, he beateth all to duſt,
This ſame is he which killeth whom him luſt,
That all the deuils of hell him hence cary,
That we no longer endure his tiranny.
This is the honour and all the reuerence
Geuen vnto them when they be from preſence.
But in ſuch honour who euer hath delite,
Which is fraudfull, ſo faynt and vnperfite.
I am not afeard to call him mad and blinde,
And a very foole, or els a ſot of kinde.

Coridon.

Cornix my frende, thou ſpeakeſt nowe to playne,
I feare leaſt this gere ſhall turne vs vnto payne
If any man be nere, be ſtill a while and harke.

Cornix

I feare not at all nowe I am ſet on warke:
Beſide this (Coridon) in court moſte part doth dwell
Flatterers and lyers, curriers of fakell,
Jugglers and diſers, and ſuch a ſhamefull rable
Which for a dinner laude men nothing laudable.
But men circumſpect which be diſcrete and wiſe,
Doth ſuch vayne laudes vtterly deſpiſe.

For

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For truely no laude is named good nor true,
Except it proceede of men which loue vertue.
A ribaudes blame is commendation,
Such vle to slaunder good conuersation.
But suche they commende as be to them semblable,
So their dispraysing to thee is profitable.

Coridon

Nowe truely my heart is eased with the same,
For Godfrey Gosmand lately did me blame.
And as for him selfe, though he be gay and stoute,
He hath nought but foly within and eke without.
To blowe in a bowle, and for to pill a platter,
To girne, to braule, to counterfayte, to flatter,
He hath no felowe betwene this and Croydon,
Saue the proude plowman (Gnato) of Thorlington.
Because he alway maligneth against me,
It playne appereth our like doth not agree.
For if we liued both after one rate,
Then should I haue him to me a frendly mate.
But Cornix proceede, tell forth of dignitie.

Cornix

Often in my tale, I hindred am by thee.
Such as for honour vnto the court resort,
Looke seldome times vpon the lower sort:
To the hyer sort for moste part they intende,
For still their desire is hyer to ascende.
And when none can make with them comparison,
Against their princes conspire they by treason.
Then when their purpose can not come well to frame,
Agayne they discende and that with vtter shame.
Coridon thou knowest right well what I meane,
We lately of this experience haue seene.
When men would ascende to rowmes honorable,
Euer is their minde and lust insaciable.
What euer they haue, they count the same but small,
While ought is greater, nought can them please but all.
And once in Cambridge I heard a scoller say,
(One of the same which go in copes gay,)
That no man should fixe ende of felicitie
In worldly honour, hye rowme or dignitie:
For it is a thing incertayne and vnstable,
Which man of him selfe to purchase is not able.
In another power this honour alway is,
Who moste it seeketh, of it doth often misse.
And who that serueth for honour and hye name,
And in this world to get him noble fame,
Much payne abideth through cares and distresse.
And with many men he hath much busynes:
And oft must he rather the minde of men content,
Then do the pleasure of God omnipotent.
Then sith two honours of diuers sortes be,
One which is geuen of men of honestie.
The second honour is of a multitude:
For very truth that man of wit is rude,
Which hunteth in court for the first honour,
The same to purchase by care and great labour.
As fortune honour no man can there obtayne,
Where neyther maners nor vertues do rayne.
The seconde honour is of commontie,
Who that requireth, yet more foolishe is he.
For he demaundeth a thing right perillous,
Vnsure, vnstable, and also vicious,
But both these sortes alway be vexed sore,
When they in honour see many them before,
And often times suche as moste vnworthy be.
For in court seldome is lauded honestie.
Thus who of honour and laude is couetous,
Unto him the court is moste contrarious.
And no where he findeth greater vexation,
Then folowing the court, suing ambition.
For who would ascende to honour principall,
Findeth in the court moste care and payne of all.

Coridon

We haue ynough had of communication
As touching honour and commendation,
Or worldly praysing for rowmes and hye name:
And though more might be declared of the same.
What leaue some my mate for other on to byall,
It were ouermuch for vs to talke of all.
Nowe talke we of might or hye authoritie,
Howe men for the same loue in the court to be.
Speede thee, for cloudes appere on euery side,
If any storme fall we can not longer abide.

Cornix

As touching power, might or authoritie:
Some thinke in the court in fauour great to be.
To be with princes of power excellent,
Some fooles counteth a thing preeminent.
Or that men should him a kinges tutour call,
Much to commaund, but nought to do at all.
Both peace and battayle to order at his will,
To be of power both to do good and ill.
But many a thousande which haue such power sought,
Haue bene deceyued, and shortly come to nought.
As with one Nero named Claudus,
In so great fauour was one Seianus,
That while this Nero was farre from his empire,
Seianus ruled the same at his desire,
So much that Seian had honour then in deede,
As of all the worlde counted the seconde head.
That if this Nero had dyed or his houre,
This Seian truely should haue bene emperour.
But by one letter he after taken was,
In vtter dishonour deposed from his place.
Led for a spectacle streyght vnto Tiber banke,
And there beheded, such was his mede and thanke.
All his ymages in his honour erect
Were with great malice downe to the grounde deiect.
Thus all his power ended with care and shame,
Who that hath wisedome will note and marke the same.
It is no matter nor thing of certayntie
With mighty princes of great power to be.
No state is febler, more weake and incertayne
Then such as semeth great with his souerayne.
He hath enuious maligners and ill will,
All out of fauour adiudgeth him for ill.
And all the housholde doth commonly him hate,
Which with the master is seruaunt and nere mate.
And this in the world is seene moste commonly,
That all hye rowmes be subiect to enuy.
Such of all other be hated and suspect,
If they ought offende, it lightly is detect.
And from all defence if they be clere and quite,
Then lye they in wayte them sharply to bacbite.
Some for them study fraudes, disceyte and gile,
And talebearers walke and greue them otherwhile.
And like as thine eye is grieued with a mote,
So princes fauour (though it be neuer so hote)
Is lightly grieued, and that for small offence,
Though it were gotten with paynefull diligence.
And oft is it lost for none offence at all,
So much with princes may tonges falle make fall.
So much talebearers by crafte forge can,
That the Emperour called Adrian
Slewe his olde frendes, and hated many one
By these talebearers and falle detraction.
And many Princes or this haue done the same
By halty credence, diskayning sore their name.
And as in Croidon I heard the Collier preache,
That holy scripture doth vs instourme and teache,

Howe

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Howe Saule, Dauid, and prudent Salomon
Commaunded to be slayne of such many one,
As hath bene with them in great auctoritie.
And dayly of such may we example see.
Because Isaac in might did rise and stande,
False Abimelech him droue out of his lande.
And Alexander with his owne handes slewe
Citron his frende, which he did after rewe.
Because he compared vnto this conquerour
His father Philippus, laudes and honour.
And such the chaunce but lately did befall
In the lande of Apuly to the great Seneschall:
Which was so greatly in fauour with the Quene,
That none was so great as he him selfe did wene.
And thought in fauour to bide more stedfastly,
For he abused the Queene dishonestly.
But to another the Queene turned her loue,
And then him murdred his presence to remoue.
And when she had founde the meanes him to kill,
Then had she diuers louers at her will.

Coridon.

O cursed woman, and deede of crueltie.

Cornix.

Yea yea Coridon, mo be as bad as she,
Some haue by malice their sucking children slayne,
But to my matter will I retourne agayne.
Their fraude and malice I will not nowe declare,
Who with them dealeth perceyueth what is care.
But nowe (Coridon) to princes to returne,
Who pleaseth this day is out agayne the morne.
Right fewe or none are by a Princes side
Which doth in fauour continually abide.
While one ascendeth, another doth discende,
This is the thing whereto they moste intende.
And which in court men chiefely go about,
Them selues to bring in, and rub another out.
And then to climbe vp to office and renowme,
And while they ascende to thrust another downe.
Eche one desireth his felowe to excell,
There is none order, no more then is in hell.
No loue, no fauour, fayth nor fidelitie,
One brother cannot sure for another be.
The sonne for the father hath no compassion,
And like pitie hath the father of his sonne.
Eche man for him selfe, and the frende for all,
Eche one desireth to be the principall.
Eche one will commaunde and haue preeminence,
And if any one haue place of excellence,
He hath about him a thousande eyne and nine,
And as many tonges to put him to ruine.
On euery side enuyers him awayte,
Deuising meanes to bring him from his state.
A man of power which many men may deare
Hath euer ill will, thus may he many feare.
Hye towres decay builded by floods side,
Which doth the waues continually abide.
What shall a shepherde do in the court to tende,
Whose life and seruice on one man doth depende.
Though thou in fauour be with a princes or king,
Yet truste not therein, it is vncertayne thing.
Thou haste him not bounde to thee with chayns strong
Of lead or yron to last and tary long.
But with feble waxe suche bande can not last,
When loue waxeth colde, then shall the linkes brast.
The feruour of wrath shall them consume and melt,
Then is thy fauour scant worth a shepes pelt.

Coridon.

Of some haue I heard of men of great honour,
Which haue in the court bid alway in fauour.
Till time their princes departed from this life,
And then with the newe had like prerogatife.
Thus in the court nothing so variable
As thou rehearsest, nor yet so reprouable.

Cornix

I graunt thee Coridon, some such haue there bene,
But that is a birde which seldome time is sene.
That is but fortune, and chaunce not on to trust,
But many be throwen vnwarely to the dust.
Some while their princes still liued in renowme,
But when they depart, all turneth vp set downe.
Then if some haue fauour with princes successours,
We see them seldome set in so hye honours,
As with their elders they did before obtayne,
A man soone falleth, and slowe is vp agayne.
So many we see deposed from degree:
And howe much the more they were in dignitie,
So much more after be they vile and abiect,
Their auncient name counted of none effect.
Then they perceyue who was their frende and so,
Before in honour forsooth they could not so.
To men of power some often stoupe and becke,
Which gladly would see their heades from the necke.
When they by fortune are on the grounde agayne,
Then laugh their foes, and haue at them disdayne.
Their frendes dolour and sorowe is not small,
Their owne dishonour a shame is worst of all.
For after they liue still in dolour and distresse,
In shame, rebukes, in care and heauynes.
This is the common ende and sure conclusion
Of such as with princes serue for promotion,
Wherfore I dare call them fooles before thee,
Which serue in the court for might or dignitie.

Coridon.

Forsooth mate Cornix, I can not well denye,
But that such chaunces do happen commonly.
Then better is small fire one easyly to warme,
Then is a great fire to do one hurt or harme.
I am assured, as for thy selfe and me,
We nede not to feare to fall from our degree.
Beggary is lowest, who that can fare withall
Needeth not to feare to lower state to fall.
But haue done Cornix, and tell the wretchednes
Of such as in court serue only for riches.
As for the other, the best that we do may
Is, to differre it vntill another day.

Cornix

Well sayde Coridon, I am content with that,
But first let me drinke, I shall the better chat.
This whey is soure, but vse easeth the payne,
Drinke Coridon, and stop it vp agayne.

Coridon

Nowe say on Cornix, thy talking liketh me,
I see that counsell excludeth capacitie.
Saue for thy wisedome or this time as I wene,
With courtly misery I tangled should haue bene.
But well fare councell when it is true and good,
I would that Minalcas this also vnderstoode.

Cornix

Many of the court resort dayly doubtlesse,
In youth to gather some treasure or riches,
Then against age they may go out agayne,
And afterwarde liue without labour or payne.
In hope of this ease and latter libertie,
Many in the court bide longe captiuitie.
And if some courtier thus to him selfe doth say,
Alas shall I neuer ought for my selfe puruey.

When

When shall I in court some little banke procure,
That from the bagge and state mine age may be sure.
The foole thinketh then moste riches for to haue
Against such season when nerest is his graue.
When nere is ended his iourney of this life,
Then is he for vitayle moste busy and prouide.
Our Sauiour sayth: It is as harde doubtles
To one which fixeth his pleasure on riches
To enter that royalme which is aboue the skye,
As an alle to enter through a needels eye.
I heard our Vicar say in like maner wise
Once when he preached against couetise:
Then it is holy great riches to purchace,
And by it to lose the hope of heauenly place.
Is not Christ able his poore men to sustayne,
Yes, and to rid them out of all other payne.
The poore Apostles be greater nowe of fame
Then riche Crœsus, for all his royall name.
When man hath in God his trust and confidence,
In all time of neede he fayleth none expence.
All good men fire their trust in God pardie.
He knoweth better what thing we neede then we.
Of some poore freers is made more curiously,
Then is some Abbey or riche monastery.
The first hath their trust in God our Creatour,
The other trusteth vpon their vayne treasour.
Thus God oft helpeth them that in him haue trust,
When worldly riches men leaueth in the dust.

Coridon

Cornix, thy promise was not to preache,
But me of the courtiers misery to teache.
Against thine owne selfe thou speakest nowe perdie,
For first thou grutchedst against pouertie.
Agayne, thou blamest plentie of riches nowe,
But fewe men liuing thy saying will alowe.
For without riches, thou sayest openly,
Vertue nor cunning nowe be nothing set by.

Cornix

I will not denye, but it is neede doubtles
For all men liuing for to haue some riches,
But trust me Coridon, there is diuersitie
Betwene to haue riches, and riches to haue thee.
Then thou hast riches when thou despisest store,
Bestowest it well, and forcest not therefore.
But riches haue thee, when wretched couetise
Thy minde subdueth to euery ill and vice.
And when thy desire is yet insaciable
Though thou haue treasure almoste innumerable.
Such maner riches (the Collyer tell thee can)
Is vile and odible both vnto God and man.
But nowe to the court for to returne agayne,
Some thinke by princes great riches to obtayne.
But while they couete inriched for to be,
Coridon, forsooth they lese their libertie.
And yet if I should the very truth expres,
No man can in court finde iust and true riches.
If thy lorde geue thee eyther golde or fee,
Vnto his seruice more art thou bounde perdie.
Saint Gregory sayth, affirming the same thing.
In greatest giftes is greatest reckening.
But if thou wilt then forth of the court depart,
When by thy prince inriched thus thou art.
Then shall be founde some gile, some fraude or trayne,
By meane whereof thou lesest all agayne.
A fault shall be founde, some one shall thee accuse
Of thing whereof thou did neuer thinke nor muse.
Though thou be giltlesse, yet shalt thou be conuict,
Fare well, thy good all shall be from thee lickt,
Or some backe reckening concerning thine office
Of all thy riches shall pill thee with a trice.
Then art thou clapped in the Flete or Clinke,
Then nought must thou say, whatsoeuer thou thinke.
For if thou begin to murmure or complayne,
Thy life thou lesest, then hast thou harmes twayne.

Coridon

Yet were it better for to continue still
As longe in the court as is the princes will.

Cornix

If thou continue, thou must be diligent
And ready at hande at eche commaundement,
When he commaundeth, thou must be prest to fight,
To ride and to go by day and eke by night.
No dreade, no daunger may helpe thee nor excuse,
No payne nor perill mayst thou flee or refuse.
Sometime must thou be in ayre contagious,
And in thoulandes other of chaunces perillous.
What he commaundeth, that nedes do thou must,
Be it good or ill, rightwise or vniust.
Laugh when he laugheth, all if thine heart be sad,
Wepe when he wepeth, be thou neuer so glad.
Laude what he laudeth, though it be not laudable,
Blame what he blameth, though it be commendable.
And shortly to speake, thou must all thing fulfill
As is his pleasure, and nothing at thy will.
None of thy wittes are at thy libertie,
Vnto thy master they needes must agree.
What is more foolishe, more fonde or imprudent
Then to get riches by such extreme torment.
For nought it is els but playne a phrenesy
To bide for riches this care and misery.
It would make one clawe where as it doth not itche
To see one liue poore because he would dye riche.
Because one in court hath gotten good, or twayne,
Should all men suppose the same there to obtayne?
And in hope thereof to lose their libertie,
But seeking riches, such findeth pouertie.
For many in court while they abide riches,
Spende all their treasure and liue in wretchednes,
What saith some foole, spende on a bone viage,
Perchaunce my wages shall paste mine heritage.
But while he spendeth till scant remayne a grote,
Home he retourneth, yea, with a threede bare coate.
His horse is so fat, that playne he is not able
To get his body nor head out of the stable.
His sworde and buckler is pledged at the bere,
And to go lighter, so is his other gere.
The rider walketh now with his bowe and arowes,
With a fayre excuse (in hedges to kill sparowes.)
And oft returning he sayde, but all to late,
Adue all courting in the deuils date.

Coridon

A fyr, this palleth nowe by the rode of some,
Better were for suche to haue bid at home.
But tell me Cornix, hath all men the bondage
And payne of the court for no more aduauntage.

Cornix

Yes, sometime riches is geuen by some chaunce
To such as of good haue greatest aboundaunce.
Likewise as streames vnto the sea do glide,
But on bare hille no water will abide:
So if a poore man serue in the court longe while,
Fortune shall neuer so frendly on him smile,
But that a riche man in rowme or hye dignitie
For a litle seruice hath more rewarde then he.
As for the seruice, none in the court shall ponder,
They note the person, still is the poore kept vnder.
For a litle man mete is a small hakney,
So smallest persons haue small rewarde alway.

But

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But men of worſhip ſet in auctoritie
Muſt haue rewardes great after their degree.
And (Coridon) princes geue nought I tell thee playne,
But when that they luſt reuoke agayne.
And ſo ſuch thinges which princes to thee geue,
To thee be as ſure as water in a ſiue.
Thou mayeſt not of them make alienation,
Nor the ſame carye vnto another nation.
Thou mayeſt not diſpoſe them after thine intent,
But like as thy prince is pleaſed and content.
Then ſuch vayne riches can be thine by no ſkill,
Sith thou haſte no might to ſpende them at thy will.
Yea, and moreouer thou haſte no facultie
The ſame to bequeath at will when thou muſt dye.
If thou want iſſue, no man ſhall be thine heyre
Saue onely the prince, thus doth the world fare.
If thou haue iſſue, ſucceede ſhall they not thee,
Except with thy prince they will in ſeruice be.
How many haue be ſlayne me needeth not expreſſe,
Of ſuch as them erſt auaunced to riches.
So princes are wont with riches ſome to fede,
As we do our ſwine when we of larde haue nede.
We fede our hogges them after to deuour,
When they be fatted by coſtes and labour.
In like wiſe princes promoteth many one,
And when they be riche, they gnaw them to the bone.
Like as Longinus and Seneca doubtleſſe,
Which as ſayth Codrus were ſlayne for their riches.
So writeth Pius (whom ſome Eneas call)
A clauſe alleaging of famous Iuuenall.

Coridon

The more of the court that thou doeſt count and tell,
The leſſe me liketh with it to deale or mell.

Cornix

What bide Coridon, yet haſte thou not heard all,
The Court is in earth an ymage infernall,
Without fayre paynted, within vggly and vile,
This know they ſurely which there hath bene a while.
But of our purpoſe nowe for to ſpeake agayne,
Fewe princes geue that which to them ſelfe attayne.
Truſt me Coridon, I tell thee by my ſoule,
They robbe ſaint Peter therewith to cloth S. Powle.
And like as dayly we both may ſee and here,
Some pill the Churche, therewith to leade the quere.
While men promoted by ſuch rapine are glad,
The wretches pilled mourne, and be wo and ſad.
And many heyres liue gilteleſſe in diſtreſſe,
While vnworthy hath honour and riches.
But ſuch vile giftes may not be true playnly,
Nor yet poſſeſſed by lawe rightwiſely.
And ſith ſewe rowmes of lordly dignitie
Be won or holden with right and equitie,
Say what thing haue they to geue by lawe and right,
Sith their chiefe treaſure is won by wrongful might.
Whence come their iewels, their coyn, and cloth of price,
Saue moſte by rapine and ſelling of Juſtice,
Els of Saint Peters, or Chriſtes patrimony.
Nowe fewe be founders, but confounders many.
Theſe be no giftes true, honeſt nor laudable,
Neyther to the geuer nor taker profitable.
Theſe men call giftes of none vtilitie,
Which thus proceedeth of falſe iniquitie.
Then leaue we this vice while all good men it hate,
For couetous with coyne be neuer ſaciate.
I hearde syr Sampſon ſay but this other day,
That Jerome and Seneca do both this ſentence ſay,
That couetous wretches not onely want that thing
Which they neuer had in title nor keeping.
But that which they haue alſo they want and fayle,
Sith they it hauing of it haue none auayle.
And as I remember, olde Codrus ſayde alſo
That golde nought helpeth when we muſt hence go.
Scant haue we pleaſure of it while we here tary,
And none can his ſtore nor glory with him cary.
Thus ought we to liue as hauing all in ſtore,
But nought poſſeſſing, or caring nought therefore.
What ſhould chriſten men ſeeke farther for riches,
Hauing foode and cloth it is ynough doubtleſſe.
And theſe may our Lorde geue vnto vs truely,
Without princes ſeruice or courtly miſery.
Thus finde we in court playne no riches at all,
Or els finde we ſuch with care continuall.
That it were better no riches to haue founde
Then for falſe treaſure in thraldome to be bound.

Coridon

Looke vp mate Cornix, beholde into the weſt,
Theſe windy cloudes vs threatneth ſome tempeſt.
My clothes be thin, my ſhepe be ſhorne newe,
Such ſtorme might fall that both might after rewe.
Driue we our flockes vnto our poore cotage,
To morowe of court we may haue more language.
This day haſte thou tolde and proued openly
That all ſuch courtiers do liue in miſery.
Which ſerue in the court for honour, laude or fame,
And might or power, thou proued haſte this fame:
And that all they liue deepeſt in diſtreſſe
Which ſerue there to win vayne treaſour and riches.
As for the other two, and if ought more remayne,
Thou mayeſt tell to morowe when we turne agayne.

Cornix

I graunt Coridon, take vp thy bottell ſone,
Leſſe is the burthen nowe that the drinke is done,
Lo here is a ſport, our bottell is contrary
To a Cowes vtter, and I ſhall tell thee why.
With a full vtter returneth home the cowe,
So doth not the bottell as it appereth nowe.
Coridon, we muſt haſte in our iourney make,
Or els ſhall the ſtorme vs and our ſhepe ouertake.

FINIS.

Thus endeth the firſt Egloge of the

miſeries of the Courtiers, compiled and dravven

by Alexander Barclay.

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Here beginneth
the ſeconde Egloge of the miſeryes
of Courtiers.

¶ *Coridon.*

HOw fel this Cornix, why taryed thou ſo long,
This is the fourth daye, ſome thinge is with thee wronge,
Els ſome perturbance of houſhold buſynes
Unto the paſture hath made thee tende the leſſe.

Cornix.

Codrus the richeſt Shepherde of our coaſt,
Which of his wethers is wont him ſelfe to boaſt,
Unto a banket frendly inuited me
The ſame day after I departed fro thee:
While I him helped his geſtes for to chere,
That hath me cauſed ſo lately to be here.

Coridon.

Who fatly fareth with coſtly meate and drinke,
For worke behouefull doth litle care or thinke.
When full is the wombe the bones would haue reſt,
Fye on ſuch ſurfeyt, fayre temperaunce is beſt.
My wiues gray hen one egge layde euery day,
My wife fed her well to cauſe her two to lay.
But when ſhe was fat, then layde ſhe none at all,
I trowe that like chaunce be vnto thee befall.
For nowe of thy flocke thou haſt no minde nor care,
Since time thy wittes were dulled with fat fare.

Cornix.

Not ſo Coridon, for when I ſup at home,
I oft go to bed with faynt and hungry wombe:
Then lye I ſlumbring to win in ſlepe I thinke
That ſame which I loſt for want of meate and drinke.
But when I am fed, then ſleepe I ſtedfaſtly,
And after ſhort reſt then worke I luſtely.

Coridon.

A birde well ingorged kepes well her neſt,
A full bely alketh a bed full of reſt.

Cornix.

That is when dyet exceedeth temperaunce,
Then foloweth ſlouth and all miſgouernaunce:
As brauling, babling, diſcorde and lechery,
Blaſpheming, lying, craking and periury.
But as touching me, becauſe I want at home,
When I am abroade I furniſh well my wombe.
Yet more I take not then nature may ſuſtayne,
And then fore worke I it to diſgeſt agayne.
So did I with Codrus till I am fatigate.

Coridon.

I wiſt well ſomething made thee to come ſo late.
We liſt no longer to commen of excelle,
But tell me Cornix what was thy buſynes.

Cornix

The riuer began the bankes to ouerflowe
At diuers partes, where as the ground was lowe.
For might of water will not our leaſure bide,
We fayne were our ſhepe a while to ſet aſide.
And both day and night to put to our diligence
For to ouercome the floudes violence.
Strengthing our bankes, and heyghting them agayne
Which were abated with floods or great rayne.

Coridon.

The earth in this poynt is like maners of men,
From hye groundes water deſcendeth to the fen.
The hye mountaynes of water them diſcharge,
And lade the riuers with floudes great and large.
Agayne the riuers diſchargeth them likewiſe,
And chargeth the Sea: ſo mens common giſe
Is alway to lay the burthen or the facke
(Which them fore grieueth) vpon ſome other backe.

Cornix.

Nothing is truer then is this of thee ſayde,
It is a true prouerbe, and prettyly conuayde.

Coridon.

But nowe thou art come, I pray thee heartyly,
Begin where thou left of Courtiers miſery.
The heauen is clere, the cloudes cleane away,
Which is a token of caume and pleaſant day.
The poynted birdes with pleaſaunt tunes ſing,
The dewy floures freſhly doth ſmell and ſpring.
All thing reioyceth, eche thing doth nature kepe,
Then were it great ſhame to vs to ſnort and ſlepe.
By mery talking long time ſeemeth ſhort,
In frendly ſpeeche is ſolace and comfort.

Cornix.

As I remember, we ſpake laſt of riches,
Nowe talke we of luſt or voluptuouſnes.
Forſooth ſome wretches of maners vile and rude
Haue counted in luſt moſte hye beatitude.
And namely the ſect which folowe Epicure,
Which ſhamefull ſect doth to this day indure.
Whom the Philoſophers and clerkes now a dayes
Deſpiſe with wordes, yet folowe they his wayes.
For what is that clerke or prelate in honour,
Which cleane deſpiſeth all temporall pleaſour.
And therfore perchaunce if any ſuch there be,
Deſpiſing to looke on fayrenes or beaurye,
Deſpiſing odours or fapour delicate,
And pleaſaunt touching deſpiſing in like rate:
Some call them happy which can ſuch thing exclude,
But no men count them of maners dull and rude.
For two diuers wayes doth mans life contayne,
The one of vertue, of diligence and payne:
The other of luſt, of pleaſure, mirth and reſt,
The firſt deſpiſing, men count the ſecond beſt.
The way of vertue is rough and deſolate,
With weede and thornes ſhut, for all men it hate.
Fewe it frequenteth or folowe in regarde,
For the firſt entry to them appereth harde.
The way of pleaſure is playne and euident,
And greatly worne, for many it frequent.
The harde way of vertue at ende hath quietnes,
The playne way of pleaſure hath daunger and diſtreſſe.
Yet where one haunteth the paſſage of vertue,
For that one foure ſore their luſtes doth inſue.

Coridon

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Coridon

These matters be hye and semeth me difficile,
Drawe to our purpose, cause me no longer muse.

Cornix

Though I be poore and here nothing set by,
Yet haue I of this scene some Philosophy,
But the lacke of vse hurteth all science,
And wretched thraldome is enemie to prudence.
What time the person is counted as abiect,
Then langour maketh the wit of small effect.
A famous doctour is blinded among fooles,
Onely his valour is clerest in the scholes.
A precious stone well couched in pure golde
Is bright and comely, and goodly to beholde,
Throwe it in the mire then is the beautie gone
And hid for the time, both of the golde and stone.
For lacke of vsing a sworde earst glased bright
With rust is eaten, made foule and blacke to sight:
Right so my reason sometime fresshe to deuise,
Is nowe made rusty for lacke of exercise.

Coridon

By this disputing thou mayst scoure of the rust,
Returne nowe to speake of pleasour and lust.

Cornix

Many blinde wretches bide in the court labour,
There wening to win their lustes and pleasour,
But it is a wonder and matter chiefe of all
To speake of their folly and appetite rurall:
But first let vs talke what pleasour is there seene
With the fiue wittes, beginning at the eyne.

Coridon

That is truth Cornix, right many thinges there be
Which men haue pleasour and great delite to see,
And these in the court be moste in abundaunce.

Cornix

Nay, there hath the sight no maner of pleasaunce,
And that shall I proue long time or it be night.
Some men deliteth beholding men to fight,
Or goodly knightes in pleasaunt apparayle,
Or sturdie souldiers in bright harnes and male,
Or an army arayde ready to the warre,
Or to see them fight, so that he stande afarre.
Some glad is to see these Ladies beauteous
Goodly appointed in clothing sumpteous:
A number of people appointed in like wise
In costly clothing after the newest gise,
Sportes, disguising, fayre courlers mount and praunce,
Or goodly ladies and knightes sing and daunce,
To see fayre houses and curious picture,
Or pleasaunt hanging, or sumpteous vesture
Of silke, of purpure or golde moste orient,
And other clothing diuers and excellent,
Hye curious buildinges or palaces royall,
Or Chapels, temples fayre and substanciall,
Images grauen or vaultes curious,
Gardeyns and medowes, or place delicious,
Forestes and parkes well furnished with dere,
Colde pleasaunt streames or welles fayre and clere,
Curious cundites or shadowie mountaynes,
Swete pleasaunt valleys, laundes or playnes,
Houndes, and suche other thinges manyfolde
Some men take pleasour and solace to beholde.
But all these pleasoures be much more iocunde
To priuate persons which not to court be bounde,
Then to suche other whiche of necessitie
Are bounde to the court as in captiuitie.
For they which be bounde to princes without fayle,
When they must nedes be present in battayle
There shall they not be at large to see the fight,
But as souldiours in middest of the fight,
To runne here and there sometime his foe to smite,
And oftetimes wounded, herein is small delite.
And more muste he thinke his body to defende,
Then for any pleasour about him to intende,
And oft is he faynt and beaten to the grounde,
I trowe in suche fight small pleasour may be founde.
As for fayre ladies clothed in silke and golde
In court at thy pleasour thou canst not beholde,
At thy princes pleasour thou shalt them onely see,
Then suche shalt thou see which little set by thee,
Whose shape and beautie may so enflame thine heart,
That thought and langour may cause thee for to smart.
For a small sparcle may kindle loue certayne,
But scantly Seuerne may quench it clene agayne,
And beautie blindeth and causeth man to set
His heart on the thing which he shall neuer get.
To see men clothed in silkes pleasauntly
It is small pleasour, and ofte causeth enuy.
While thy leane Jade halteth by thy side
To see another vpon a Courser ride,
Though he be neyther gentleman nor knight,
Nothing is thy fortune thy hart can not be light.
As touching sportes and games of pleasaunce,
To sing, to reuell and other daliaunce:
Who that will truely vpon his lorde attende
Vnto suche sportes he seldome may entende.
Palaces, pictures and temples sumptuous,
And other buildinges both gay and curious:
These may marchauntes more at their pleasour see,
Then suche as in court be bounde alway to bee.
Sith kinges for moste parte palle not their regions,
Thou seest nowe Cities of foreyn nations.
Suche outwarde pleasoures may the people see,
So may not courtiers for lacke of libertie.
As for these pleasours of thinges variable
Which in the fieldes appeareth delectable,
But seldome season mayst thou obtayne respite
The same to beholde with pleasour and delite.
Sometime the courtier remayneth halfe the yere
Close within walles muche like a prisonere,
To make escapes come seldome times are wont,
Saue when their princes haue pleasour for to hunt,
Or els otherwise them selfe to recreate,
And then this pleasour shall they not loue but hate:
For then shall they sooth most chiefely to their payne,
When they in mindes would at home remayne.
Other in the frost, hayle or els snowe,
Or when some tempest or mightie wind doth blowe,
Or els in great heat and feruour excessiue,
But close in houses the moste parte waste their liue,
Of colour faded, and choked nere with dust:
This is of courtiers the ioy and all the lust.

Coridon

What, yet may they sing and with fayre ladies daunce,
Both commen and laugh, herein is some pleasaunce.

Cornix.

Nay, nay Coridon, that pleasour is but small,
Some to contente what man will pleasour call,
For some in the daunce hir pincheth by the hande,
Which gladly would see him stretched in a bande.
Some galand seketh hir fauour to purchase,
Which playne abhorreth for to beholde his face.
And still in daunsing moste parte inclineth she
To one muche viler and more abiect then he.
No day ouerpasseth but that in court men finde
A thousande thinges to vexe and greue their minde.

Alway thy foes are present in thy sight,
And often so great is their degree and might
That nedes must thou kisse ye hand which did thee harm
Though thou would see it cut gladly from the arme.
And briefly to speake, if thou to court resorte,
Yf thou see one thing of pleasour or comfort,
Thou shalt see many before or thou depart
To thy displeasour and pensuenes of heart:
So findeth thy sight there of more bitternes
And of displeasour, then pleasour and gladnes.

Coridon

As touching the sight nowe see I clere and playne
That men in the court shall finde but care and payne,
But yet me thinketh as dayly doth appeare,
That men in the court may pleasaunt thinges heare,
And by suche meanes haue delectation,
While they heare tidinges and communication,
And all the chaunces and euery neweltie
Alwell of our coste as farre beyonde the sea.
There men may heare some that common of wisdome,
For of men wisest within the court be some,
There be recounted and of men learned tolde
Famous Chronicles of actes great and olde,
The worthy dedes of princes excellent,
To moue yong princes suche actes to frequent.
For when wise men dare not bad princes blame,
For their misliuing, Minalcas sayth the same,
Of other princes then laude they the vertue
To stirre their lordes suche liuing to ensue.
And while they commende princes vnworthily,
To be commendable they warne them secretly.
All this may courtiers in court ofte times heare,
And also songes of times swete and cleare.
The birde of Cornewall, the Crane and the Kite,
And mo other like to heare is great delite,
Warbling their tunes at pleasour and at will,
Though some be busy that therin haue no skill.
There men may heare muche other melody
In sounde resembling an heauenly armony.
Is this not pleasour? me thinkes no mirth is scant
Where no reioysing of minstrelcie doth want,
The bagpipe or fidle to vs is delectable,
Then is there solace more greatly commendable.

Cornix

Thou art discreaued and so be many mo,
Which for suche pleasour vnto the court will go,
But for these also I muste finde remedy,
Whiche sue to the court for lust of melody.
They be mad fooles which to reioyce their eares
Will liue in court more dreadfull then with beares:
In stede of pleasour suche finde but heauines,
They heare small good, but muche vnhappines.
As touching tidinges which thou dost first abiect,
There muche thinges is tolde falle and of none effect,
And more displeasour shall wise men in them finde
Then ioye and pleasour to comfort of their minde.
These be tidinges in court moste commonly,
Of Cities taken, warre, fraude and tiranny,
Good men subdued or els by malice slayne,
And bad in their stede haue victory and reigne,
Of spoyling, murther, oppression and rapine,
Howe lawe and iustice sore falleth to ruine.
Among the courtiers suche newelties be tolde,
And in meane season they laugh both yong and olde.
While one recounteth some dedes abhominable,
Suche other wretches repute it commendable.
But men of wisedome well learned in Scripture,
Which talke of maners or secretes of nature,
Or of histories, their disputation
Is swetely sauced with adulation,
They cloke the truth their princes to content,
To purchase fauour and minde beneuolent,
And sometime poetes or oratours ornate
Make orisons before some great estate,
It is not so swete to heare them talking there
Where as their mindes be troubled oft with feare,
As in the scholes, where they at libertie
Without all flattering may talke playne veritie.
For truely in courtes all communication
Must nedes haue spice of adulation.
Suche as be giltie anone be mad and wroth
If one be so bolde playnly to say the troth,
Therfore ill liuers ofte times lauded be,
And men displayed which loue honestie,
And true histories of actes auncient
Be falsely turned some princes to content,
And namely when suche histories testifie
Blame or dishonour touching his progenie.
Then newe histories be fayned of the olde,
With flattery paynted and lyes manyfolde.
Then some good scholer without promotion
Hearing suche glosed communication,
Dare not be so bolde his lying to gaynsay,
But laugh in his minde yet at the foole he may.
And also in the court Auctours not veritable
And least of valour are counted moste laudable,
But Liuius, Salust and Quintus Curcius,
Justinian, Plutarche and Suetonius,
With these noble Auctours and many suche mo
In this time courtiers will nothing haue to do.

Coridon

Cornix, where hast thou these strange names sought?

Cornix.

I sought not in youth the world all for nought.
Minstrels and singers be in the court likewise,
And that of the best and of the French gise,
Suche men with princes be fene more acceptable
Then men of wisedome and clarkes venerable,
For Philosophers, Poetes and Oratours
Be seldome in court had in so great honours.
When thou fayne would here suche folkes play or sing,
Nothing shall be done of them at thy liking,
But when it pleaseth thy prince them to call
Their sounde ascendeth to chamber and to hall,
When thou wouldest slepe or do some busines
Then is their musike to thee vnquietnes,
Yet bide their clamour and sounde thou must
To thy great trouble and no pleasour or lust:
This is of singers the very propertie,
Alway they couert desired for to be,
And when their frendes would heare of their cunning
Then are they neuer disposed for to sing,
But if they begin desired of no man
Then shewe they all and more then they can,
And neuer leaue they till men of them be wery,
So in their conceyt their cunning they set by:
And thus when a man would gladliest them heare,
Then haue they disdayne in presence to appeare,
And then when a man would take his ease and rest,
Then none can voyde them they be in place so prest,
Yet muste thou nedes eche season principall
Rewarde suche people els art thou nought at all,
For their displeasour to thee and paynes harde:
Lo suche is the court, thou must geue them rewarde.
Beside this in the court men scant heare other thing
Saue chiding and brauling, banning and cursing.
Eche one is busy his felowe for to blame,
There is blasphemed of Gods holy name,
Deuising othes with pleasour for the nonce,
And often they speake together all at once,

So

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So many clamours vse they at euery tide
That scant mayst thou heare thy fellowe by thy side,
They boste their sinnes as paste the feare of shame,
Detracting other men faultie in the same,
One laudeth his lande where he was bred and borne,
At others countrey hauing disdayne and scorne,
On eche side soundeth foule speche of ribawdry,
Vaunting and bosting of sinne and vilanny,
No measure, no maner, shame, nor reuerence,
Haue they in wordes in secret or presence,
A rustie ribaude more viler then a sowe
Hath in the court more audience then thou,
Some boke, some braule, some slaunder and backbite,
To heare suche maners can be but small delite,
Except a wretche will confourme him to that sorte,
Then in suche hearing his blindnes hath comfort.
These scabbed scolions may do and say their will,
When men of worship for very shame are still,
Who that hath wisedome would rather deafe to be
Then dayly to heare suche vile enormitie.

Coridon

I see in hearing men in the court haue no ioye,
Yet is it pleasour to handle and to toye
With Galatea, Licoris or Phillis,
Neera, Malkin or lustie Testalis,
And other dames, yf coyne be in the pouche
Men may haue pleasour them for to kele and touche.
In court hath Venus hir power principall,
For women vse to loue them moste of all
Which boldly bosteth or that can sing and iet,
Which are well decked with large bushes set,
Which hath the maistery ofte time in tournament,
Or that can gambauld or daunce feat and gent,
Or that can alway be mery without care,
With suche can wemen moste chiefly deale and fare:
So may these courtiers in court some pleasour win
Onely in touching and feling their softe skinne.

Cornix

Thou art abused, forsooth it is not so,
Louers in court haue moste of care and wo.
Some women loue them inflamed by vile lust,
But yet very fewe dare them beleue or trust:
For well knowe wemen that courtiers chat and bable,
They bost their sinnes, and euer be vnstable
After their pleasour, then to the olde adewe,
Then be they busy to puruay for a newe.
This knowe all wemen, some by experience,
So fewe to courtiers geue trust or confidence,
Except it be suche as forseth not hir name,
Or palleth all feare, rebuke or worldly shame,
Then suche a brothell hir keepeth not to one,
For many courtiers ensueth hir alone.
And none shalt thou loue of this sorte pardee,
But that she loueth another better then thee.
And then as often as parting felowes mete
They chide and braule though it be in the strete,
Hatred and strife and fighting commeth after,
Effusion of bloud, and oftentime manslaughter.
Thou canst no woman kepe streite and nigardly,
To whom many one doth promise largely.
Another shall come more frethe and gayly decte,
Then hath he fauour and thou art cleane abiecte,
Then thou hast wasted thy money, name and fede,
Then shalt thou haue nought saue a mocke for thy mede,
Thou art the ninth wening to be alone,
For none of this sorte can be content with one:
Yet shall she fayne hir chast as Penelope,
Though she loue twentie as well as she doth thee,
And eche for his time shall haue a mery loke.
She sigheth as she great sorowe for thee toke,
With fayned teares she moysteneth oft thy lap
Till time that thy purse be taken in a trap,
And if she perceiue that all thy coyne is gon,
Then daunce at the doore, adewe gentle John.
And ofte when thou goest to visite thy lemman,
With hir shalt thou finde some other ioly man,
Then shall she make thee for to beleue none other
But he his hir father, hir vncle or hir brother:
But playnly to speake, he brother is to thee,
If kinred may rise of suche iniquitie.
Agayne to hir house if that thou after come
Then shalt thou finde that she is not at home,
But gone to some other, which for rebuke and shame
Durst not come to hir for hurting of his name.

Coridon

Here is a rule, this doth excede my minde,
Who would thinke this gile to be in womankinde;
But yet man pardie some be as good within
As they be outwarde in beautie of their skin,
Of this curled sorte they can not be eche one,
Some be which kepe them to one louer alone,
As Penelope was to hir Ulisses.
Thinke on what Codrus recounted of Lucres,
Though she not willing was falsly violate
With hir owne handes procured she hir fate.

Cornix

It were a great wonder among the women all
If none were parties of luste generall,
I graunt some chast what time they can not chuse,
As when all men their company refuse,
Or when she knoweth hir vice should be detect,
Then of milliuing auoydeth she the sect.
And though in the world some women thou mayst find
Which chastly liue of their owne kinde,
Or that can kepe hir selfe onely to one,
Yet is with suche of pleasour small or none,
To hir at pleasour thou canst not resorte:
In pleasour stollen small is the comfort,
Neyther mayst thou longe with suche one remayne,
And in shorte pleasour departing in great payne,
To hir mayst thou come but onely nowe and then,
By stealth and startes as priuily as thou can.
Thy loue and thy lorde mayst thou not serue together,
If so, thy wit is distract thou wot not whither,
Thy lorde doth chalenge to him thy whole seruice,
And the same doth loue chalenge in like wise.
Not onely it is harde in the court to saue
Thy leman chast with hir pleasour to haue,
But also it is extreme difficultie
Thine owne wife in court to kepe in chastitie,
For flattering woers on euery side appeare,
And lustie galandes of fayre dissimuled cheare:
Some promis golde and giftes great and small,
Some hastie galande is yet before them all,
So many woers, baudes and brokers,
Flatterers, liers, and hastie prokerers
Be alway in court, that chast Penelope
Coulde scant among them preserue hir chastitie.
So great temptation no woman may resist,
If heauenly power hir might do not assist.
For craft and coyne, flattery and instaunce,
Turneth chast myndes to vile misgouernaunce.
Though she be honest yet must thou leaue thy loue,
Sith princes courtes continually remoue,
Then whether she be thy wife or thy concubine,
Hir care and dolour is great, and so is thine:
For neyther mayest thou with hir abide,
Nor lede hir with thee, or kepe hir by thy side,
When thou art gone if she behinde remayne
Then feare thee troubleth with torment & with payne.

Because that the minde of woman is vnstable
Alway thou doubtest least she be changeable,
And I allure thee if man be out of sight
The minde of woman to returne is very light,
Once out of sight and shortly out of minde,
This is their maner appeare they neuer so kinde.
Adde to all these scorne and derision
Which thou mayst suffer, and great suspection,
Infamy, slaunder and priuie ielosie,
These muste thou suffer without all remedy,
And other daungers mo then a man can thinke,
While other sleepeth the louer scant doth winke.
Who hath these proued shall none of them desire,
For children brent still after dreade the fire:
Sith that these thinges to all men be greuous,
They be to courtes yet moste dammagious,
Moste paynefull, noyous, and playnely importable,
In court them feling hath nothing delectable.

Coridon.

I see the pleasour of touching is but small,
I thought it hony, I see nowe it is gall.
Nowe speake on Cornix, I pray thee briefely tell,
What ioye haue courtiers in tasting or in smell,
For these two wittes in court be recreate,
Els many wretches be there infatuate.

Cornix

The smell and tasting partly conioyned be,
And part disioyned as I shall tell to thee,
For while we receyue some meates delicate,
The smell and tasting then both be recreate,
The fragraunt odour and oyntment of swete floure
Onely deliteth the smelling with dolour.
Of meat delicious gone is the smell and tast
When it is chewed and through the gorge past,
But they which in mouth haue pleasour principall,
Are beastly fooles and of liuing brutall.
The famous shepheard whom Nero did behede
Them greatly blameth which beastly vse to fede,
Which for their wombe chiefe care and labour take,
And of their bellies are wont their God to make.

Coridon.

A god of the wombe, that heard I neuer ere.

Cornix.

Coridon thou art not to olde for to lere,
I playnly shall nowe declare for thy sake,
Howe beastly gluttons a god of their wombes make:
To God are men wont temples to edifie,
And costly auters to ordeyne semblably,
To ordeyne ministers to execute seruice,
To offer beastes by way of sacrifice,
To burne in temples well smelling incence,
Gluttons to the wombe do all this reuerence.

Coridon

They and their goddes come to confusion,
Which forgeth Idols by suche abusion,
But procede Cornix, tell in wordes playne,
Howe all these thinges they to the wombe ordeyne,
Which is in temple the aulter and incence,
And the ministers to do their diligence,
Within the temple to kepe alway seruice,
And to the belly which is the sacrifice.

Cornix

To god of the belly gluttons a temple make
Of the smoky kitchin, for temple it they take,
Within this temple minister bawdy cookes,
And yong scolions with kendes of their lookes,
The solemne aulter is the boorde or table,
With dishes charged twentie in a rable,
The beastes offred in sacrifice or hoste
In diuers sortes of sodden and of roste,
The sawse is instence or of the meate the smell,
And of this temple these be the vessell,
Platters and dishes, morter and potcrokes,
Pottes and pestels, broches and fleshe hokes,
And many mo els then I can count or tell,
They know them best which with the kitchen mell,
For god of the wombe this seruice they prepare,
As for their true God full little is their care.

Coridon

This like is beastly and vtterly damnable.

Cornix

But yet it is nowe reputed commendable.
Princes and commons and many of religion
Vnto this temple haue theyr deuotion,
To cookes and tauernes come earlier frequent
Then vnto the seruice of God omnipotent,
First serue the belly then after serue our lorde,
Suche is the worlde though it do ill accorde,
And suche as deliteth in beastly gluttony
Foloweth the court, supposing stedfastly
With meat and with drinke to stuffe well the paunch,
Whose luste insatiate no flood of hell can staunch.
And for that princes vse costly meat and wine,
These fooles suppose to fede them with as fine,
To eate and drinke as swete and delicate
As doth their princes or other great estate.
Likewise as flyes do folowe and thicke swarme
About fat paunches vnto their vtter harme:
So suche men as haue in gluttony comfort
To lordes kitchins moste busely resorte,
With hungry throtes yet go they ofte away,
And ofte haue the flyes muche better part then they.

Coridon

Then tell on Cornix what comfort and pleasour
Men finde in court in tasting and sauour,
With meat and drinke howe they their wombes fill,
And whether they spede at pleasour and at will.

Cornix.

To eate and to drinke then is moste ioye and luste
When men be hungry and greued sore with thurst,
But ofte vnto noon muste thou abide respite,
Then turned is hunger to dogges appetite,
For playne wood hungry that time is many one,
That some would gladly be gnawing of a bone,
On which vile curres hath gnawen on before,
His purse is empty and hunger is so sore,
Or some by feblenes and weary tarying
Lese their appetite that they can eate nothing.
Some other hath eaten some bread and these before,
That at their diner they list to eate no more,
Their stomake stopped and closed with some crust
From them hath taken their appetite and lust,
Then other courtiers of maners bestiall
With greedy mouthes deuoureth more then all.
Thus some at rising be fuller then be swine,
And some for hunger agayne may sit and dine.
Sometime together muste thou both dine and sup,
And sometime thou dinest before the sunne be vp,
But if thou refuse to eate before day light
Then muste thou tary and fast till it be night,
To eate and to drinke then is it small delite
When no disgestion hath stirred appetite.
Agayne thou art set to supper all to late,
All thing hath season which men of court not hate,

For

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For neuer shall thy meate be set to thee in season,
Whereof procedeth muche sore vexation,
Olde age intestate departed sodenly,
And luskie galandes departeth semblably,
Hereof procedeth the vomite and the stone,
And other sicknes many mo then one.
Sometime is the wine soure, watery and so bad,
That onely the colour might make a man be mad,
Colde without measure or hote as horse pis,
Bad is the colour the sauour badder is:
But if in the court thou drinke both beare and ale,
Then is the colour troubled, blacke and pale,
Thinke not to drinke it in glasse, siluer or golde,
The one may be stollen, the other can not holde,
Of a trene vessell then must thou nedely drinke,
Olde, blacke and ruskie, lately taken fro some sinke,
And in suche vessell drinke shalt thou often time
Which in the bottom is full of filth and slime,
And of that vessell thou drinkest oft iwis
In which some states or dames late did pis:
Yet shalt thou not haue a cup at thy delite
To drinke of alone at will and appetite,
Coridon in court I tell thee by my soule
For most parte thou muste drinke of a common boule,
And where grely lippes and slimy bearde
Hath late bene dipped to make some mad afeарde,
On that side muste thou thy lippes washe also,
Or els without drinke from diner muste thou go.
In the meane season olde wine and dearely bought,
Before thy presence shall to thy prince be brought,
Whose smell and odour so swete and maruelous
With fragrant sauour inbaumeth all the house,
As Mulcadell, Capsike, Romney and Malueсy,
From Gene brought, from Grece or Hungary,
Suche shall he drinke, suche shall to him be brought,
Thou haste the sauour thy parte of it is nought,
Though thou shouldest perishe for very ardent thirst
No drop thou gettest for to aslake thy lust,
And though good wines sometime to thee be brought
The taste of better shall cause it to be nought,
Oft wouldest thou drinke yet darest thou not sup
Till time thy better haue tasted of the cup.
No cup is filled till diner halfe be done,
And some ministers it counteth then to sone,
But if thou begin for drinke to call and craue
Thou for thy calling such good rewarde shalt haue,
That men shall call thee malapart or dronke,
Or an abbey lowne or limner of a monke,
But with thy rebuke yet art thou neuer the nere,
Whether thou demaunde wine, palled ale or beare,
Yet shalt thou not drinke when thou hast nede & thirst,
The cup muste thou spare ay for the better lust,
Through many handes shall passe the pece or cup,
Before or it come to thee is all dronke vp,
And then if a droppe or two therin remayne
To licke the vessell sometime thou art full fayne,
And then at the ground some filth if thou espy
To blame the butler thou gettest but enuy.
And as men wekely newe holy water powre,
And once in a yere the vessell vse to scoure,
So cups and tankardes in court as thou mayst thinke,
Wherein the commons are sted for to drinke,
Are once in the yere empty and made cleane,
And scantly that well as oftentime is sene.
For to aske water thy wines to allay
Thou finde shalt no nede if thou before assay,
With rinsing of cuppes it tempered is before
Because pure water perchaunce is not in store.

Coridon

Fye on this maner, suche seruice I defy,
I see that in court is vncleane penury,
Yet here though our drinke be very thin and small,
We may therof plenty haue when we do call,
And in cleane vessell we drinke therof pardee,
Take here the bottle Cornix, assay and see.

Cornix.

Then call for the priest when I refuse to drinke,
This ale brewed Bently it maketh me to winke.

Coridon

Thou sayest true Cornix, beleue me, by the rood
No hand is so sure that can alway make good,
But talke of the court if thou haste any more,
Set downe the bottle saue some licour in store.

Cornix

God blesse the brewer well cooled is my throte,
Nowe might I for nede sing hier by a note,
It is bad water that can not allay dust,
And very soure ale that can not quench thirst,
Nowe rowleth my tonge, now chat I without payne,
Nowe heare me I enter into the court agayne.
Beholde in the court on common table clothes,
So vile and ragged that some his diner lothes,
Touche them then shall they vnto thy fingers cleue,
And then must thou wipe thy handes on thy sleue.
So he which dayly fareth in this gise
Is so imbrued and noynted in suche wise,
That as many men as on his skirtes looke
Count him a scroleon or els a greesly cooke.

Coridon

Yet Cornix agayne all courting I defye,
More clennes is kept within some hogges stye,
But yet mate Cornix all be not thus I wene,
For some table clothes be kept white and clene,
Finer then silke and chaunged euery day.

Cornix

Coridon, forsooth it is as thou doest say,
But these be thinges most chiefe and principall,
Onely reserued for greatest men of all:
As for other clothes which serue the commontie,
Suche as I tolde thee or els viler be,
And still remayne they vnto the planke cleuing,
So blacke, so baudie, so foule and ill seming,
Of sight and of cent so vile and abhominable,
Till scant may a man discerne them from the table.
But nowe heare what meat there nedes eate thou must,
And then if thou mayst to it apply thy lust:
And then if thou mayst to it apply thy lust:
Thy meate in the court is neyther swanne nor heron,
Curlewe nor crane, but courle beefe and mutton,
Fat porke or vele, and namely such as is bought
For easter price when they be leane and nought.
Thy flesshe is reskie or leane, tough and olde,
Or it come to borde vnsauery and colde,
Sometime twise sodden, and cleane without taste,
Sauled with coles and ashes all for haste,
When thou it eatest it smelleth so of smoke
That euery morsell is able one to choke.
Make hunger thy sause be thou neuer so nice,
For there shalt thou finde none other kinde of spice.
Thy potage is made with wedes and with ashes,
And betwene thy teeth oft time the coles crashes,
Sometime halfe sodden is both thy flesshe & broth,
The water and herbes together be so wroth
That eche goeth aparte, they can not well agree,
And ofte be they salte as water of the sea.
Seldome at chese hast thou a little licke,
And if thou ought haue within it shall be quicke,
All full of mazots and like to the raynebowe,
Of diuers colours as red, grene and yelowe,

On eche ſide gnawen with miſe or with ratres,
Or with vile wormes, with dogges or with cattes,
Uncleane and ſcorvy, and harde as the ſtone,
It looketh ſo well thou wouldeſt it were gone.
If thou haue butter then ſhall it be as ill
Or worſe then thy chefe, but hunger hath no ſkill,
And when that egges halfe hatched be almoſt
Then are they for thee layde in the fire to roſt.
If thou haue peares or apples be thou ſure
Then be they ſuche as might no longer endure,
And if thou none eate they be ſo good and fine
That after diner they ſerue for the ſwine.
Thy oyle for frying is for the lampes mete,
A man it choketh the ſauour is ſo ſwete,
A corvwayners ſhop and it haue equall ſent,
Suche payne and penaunce accordeth beſt to lent,
Suche is of this oyle the ſauour perillous,
That it might ſerpentes driue out of an houſe,
Oftetime it cauſeth thy ſtomake to reboke,
And ofte it is ready thee ſodenly to choke.
Of fiſhe in ſome court thy chefe and bred diſhe
Is whiting, hearing, ſaltfiſhe and ſtockfiſhe,
If the daye be ſolemne perchaunce thou mayſt fele
The taſte and the ſapour of tenche or ele,
Their muddy ſapour ſhall make thy ſtomake ake,
And as for the ele is coſin to a ſnake,
But if better fiſhe or any diſhes more
Come to thy parte it nought was before,
Corrupt, ill ſmelling, and fiue dayes olde,
For lent thou canſt not receyue it if thou would.
Thy bread is blacke, of ill ſapour and taſte,
And harde as a flint becauſe thou none ſhould waſt,
That ſcant be thy teeth able it to breake,
Dippe it in potage if thou no chiſt can make,
And though white and browne be both at one price,
With broune ſhalt thou fede leaſt white might make thee
The lordes will alway that people note & lee nice,
Betwene them and ſeruauntes ſome diuerſitie,
Though it to them turne to no profite at all,
If they haue pleaſour the ſeruaunt ſhall haue ſmall.
Thy diſhes be one continuing the yere,
Thou knoweſt what meat before thee ſhall appeare,
This flaketh great parte of luſte and pleaſour,
Which flaketh dayntes moſte diuers of ſapour,
On one diſhe dayly nedes ſhalt thou blowe,
Till thou be all wery as dogge of the bowe,
But this might be ſuffred may fortune eaſily,
If thou ſawe not ſweter meates to paſſe by,
For this vnto courtiers moſte commonly doth hap,
That while they haue broune bread & chefe in their lap,
On it faſte gnawing as houndes rauenous,
Anone by them paſſeth of meate delicious,
And coſtly diſhes a ſcore may they tell,
Their greedy gorges are rapt with the ſmell,
The deynteous diſhes which paſſe through the hall,
It were great labour for me to name them all,
And Corydon all if I would it were but ſhame
For ſimple ſhepheardes ſuche dayntes to name.
With broune bread and chefe the ſhepheard is content,
And ſcant ſee we fiſhe paſte once in the lent,
And other ſeaſons ſofte chefe is our food,
With butter & creame then is our diner good.
And milke is our mirth and ſpeciall appetite,
In apples and plommes alſo is our delite.
Thefe fill the belly although we hunger ſore,
When man hath inough what nedeth him haue more,
But when theſe courtiers ſit on the benches idle,
Smelling thoſe diſhes they bite vpon the bridle,
And then is their payne and anger felt as gall
When all paſſeth by and they haue nought at all.
What fiſhe is of ſauour ſwete and delicious
While thou ſore hungreſt thy prince hath plenteous.
Roſted or ſodden in ſwete hearbes or wine,
Or fried in oyle moſte ſaporous and fine,
Suche fiſhe to beholde and none therof to taſte,
Pure enuy cauſeth thy heart nere to braſt,
Then ſeing his diſhes of fleſhe newe agayne,
Thy minde hath torment yet with muche great payne,
Well mayſt thou ſmell the paſties of a hart
And diuers dayntes, but nought ſhall be thy parte.
The crane, the feſant, the pecocke and curlewe,
The partriche, plouer, bittor and heronſewe,
Eche birde of the ayre and beaſtes of the grounde
At princes pleaſour ſhalt thou beholde abounde,
Seaſoned ſo well in licour redolent
That the hall is full of pleaſaunt ſmell and ſent,
To ſee ſuche diſhes and ſmell the ſwete odour,
And nothing to taſte is vtter diſpleaſour.

Coridon

Yes ſomewhat ſhall come who can his time abide,
And thus may I warne my felowe by my ſide,
What eate ofte Diomo, and haue not ſo great haſt,
For ſhortly we ſhall ſome better morſell taſte,
Softe man and ſpare thou a corner of thy belly,
Anone ſhall be ſent vs ſome little diſhe of Jelly,
A legge of a ſwan, a partriche or twayne.

Cornix

Nay, nay Coridon, thy biding is in vayne,
Thy thought ſhall vaniſhe, ſuche diſhes be not ſmall,
For common courtiers of them haue nought at all,
To thy next felowe ſome morſell may be ſent
To thy diſpleaſour, great anguiſhe and torment,
Wherby in thy minde thou mayſt ſuſpect and trowe
Him more in fauour and in conceipt then thou.
And ſometime to thee is ſent a little crap
With fauour therof to take thee in the trap,
Not to allay thy hunger and deſire,
But by the ſweteneſs to ſet thee more on fire.
Beſide all this ſorowe increaſed is thy payne,
When thou beholdeſt before thy lorde payne mayne
A baker choſen and waged well for thy,
That onely he ſhould that buſines apply,
If thou one manchet dare handle or els touche,
Becauſe of duetie to thruſt it in thy pouche,
Then ſhall ſome ſlouen thee dathe on the eare,
Thou thrinkeſt for ſhame thy bread leauing there.

Coridon

My bagge full of ſtones and hooke in my hande
Should geue me a courage ſuche boldly to withſtand.

Cornix.

Not ſo Coridon, they fare like to curres,
Together they cleaue more faſt then do burres,
Though eche one with other ofte chide, braule & fight,
Againſt a poore ſtranger they ſhewe all their might.
It is a great maſtery for thee Coridon alone
To ſtriue or contende with many mo then one,
A ſtrawe for thy wildome and arte liberall,
For fauour and coyne in court worketh all.
Thy princes apples be ſwete and orient,
Suche as Minalcas vnto Amintas ſent,
Or ſuche as Agros did in his keping holde,
Of fragrant ſapour and colour like pure golde,
In fauour of whom thou onely haſte delite,
But if thou ſhould dye no morſell ſhalt thou bite.
His chefe is coſtly, fat, pleaſaunt and holeſome,
Though thy teeth water thou eateſt not a crume,
Upon the ſewer well mayſt thou gale and gape,
While he is filled thy hunger is a iape.
Before thy ſoueraygne ſhall the keruer ſtande,
With diuers geſture his knife in his hande,

Diſmem-

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Dismembring a crane, or somewhat deynteous:
And though his parsell be fat and plenteous,
Though vnto diuers thou see him cut and kerue,
Thou getteſt no gobbet though thou shuld dye & sterue.
In all that thy sight hath delectation,
Thy greedy talking hath great vexation.
What man will beleue that in such wretched thing,
A courtier may finde his pleasure or liuing.
What man is he but rather would assent
That in such liuing is anguish and torment.
May not this torment be well compared thus
Vnto the torment of wretched Tantalus,
Which as saide Faustus, whose saying I may thinke,
In floud and fruites may neither eate nor drinke:
Auncient Poetes this Tantalus do sayne
In hell condemned to suffer such payne,
That vp to the chin in water doth he stande,
And to his vpper lip reache apples a thousande,
But when he would drinke, the water doth descende,
And when he would eate, the apples do ascende.
So both fruite and water them keepeth at a stent,
In middes of pleasures haue courtiers like torment.
But nowe to the table for to retourne agayne,
There haste thou yet another grieuous payne:
That when other talke and speake what they will,
Thou dare not whisper, but as one dombe be still.
And if thou ought speake priuy or apert,
Thou art to buly, and called malepert.
If thou call for ought by worde, signe or becke,
Then Jacke with the buth shal taunt thee with a chek.
One reacheth thee bread with grutch and murmuring,
If thou of some other demaunde any thing,
He hath at thy asking great scorne and disdayne,
Because that thou sittest while he standeth in payne.
Sometime the seruauntes be blinde and ignoraunt,
And spye not what thing vpon the borde doth want.
If they see a fault they will it not attende,
By negligent scorne disdayning it to mende.
Sometime thou wantest eyther bread or wine,
But nought dare thou aske if thou should neuer dine.
Demaunde salt, trencher, spone, or other thing,
Then art thou importune, and euermore crauing:
And so shall thy name be spread to thy payne,
For at thee shall all haue scorne and disdayne.
Sometime art thou yxed of them at the table,
But muche more art thou of the seruing table.
The hungry seruers which at the table stande
At euery morsell hath eye vnto thy hande,
So much on thy morsell distract is their minde,
They gape when thou gapest, oft biting the winde.
Because that thy leauinges is onely their part,
If thou keede thee well sore grieued is their heart.
Namely of a dish costly and deynteous,
Ech pece that thou cuttest to them is tedious.
Then at the cupborde one doth another tell,
See howe he feedeth like the deuill of hell.
Our part he eateth, nought good shall we tast,
Then pray they to God that it be thy last.

Coridon.

I had leuer Cornix go supperlesse to bed,
Then at such a feast to be so bested.
Better is it with chese and bread one to fill,
Then with great dayntie, with anger and ill will.
Or a small handfull with rest and sure pleasaunce,
Then twenty dishes with wrathfull countenaunce.

Cornix

That can Amintas recorde and testify,
But yet is in court more payne and misery.
Brought in be dishes the table for to fill,
But not one is brought in order at thy will.
That thou would haue first and louest principall
Is brought to the borde oft times last of all.
With bread and rude meate when thou art satiate,
Then commeth dishes moste sweete and delicate.
Then must thou eyther despise them vtterly,
Or to thy hurt surfet, ensuing gluttony.
But if it fortune, as seldome doth befall,
That at beginning come dishes best of all,
Or thou haste tasted a morsell or twayne,
Thy dish out of sight is taken soone agayne.
Slowe be the seruers in seruing in alway,
But swifte be they after, taking thy meate away.
A speciall custome is vsed them among,
No good dish to suffer on borde to be longe.
If the dishe be pleasaunt, eyther flesshe or fishe,
Ten handes at once swarme in the dishe.
And if it be flesh, ten knives shalt thou see
Mangling the flesh and in the platter flee:
To put there thy handes is perill without fayle,
Without a gauntlet or els a gloue of mayle.
Among all thele knives thou one of both must haue,
Or els it is harde thy fingers whole to saue:
Oft in such dishes in court is it seene.
Some leaue their fingers, ech knife is so kene.
One finger gnaweth some hasty glutton,
Supposing it is a piece of bieke or mutton.
Beside these in court mo paynes shalt thou see,
At borde be men set as thicke as they may be.
The platters shall passe oft times to and fro,
And ouer the shoulders and head shall they go.
And oft all the broth and licour sat
Is spilt on thy gowne, thy bonet and thy hat.
Sometime art thou thrust for litle rowme and place,
And sometime thy elbowe reboketh in thy face.
Betwene dish and dish is tary tedious,
But in the meane time thogh thou haue payne greuous,
Neyther mayest thou rise, cough, spit or mese,
Or take other ealement, least thou thy name may lese.
For such as this wise to ease them are wont,
In number of falsoldes courtiers them count.
Of meate is none houre, nor time of certentie,
Yet from beginning absent if thou be,
Eyther shalt thou loke thy meat and kille the post,
Or if by fauour thy supper be not lost,
Thou shalt at the least way rebukes soure abide
For not attending and fayling of thy tide.
Onions or garlike, which stamped Tesstilis,
Nor yet sweete leekes mayst thou not eate ywis.

Coridon.

What, forsake garlike, leekes, and butter sweete?
Nay, rather would I go to Ely on my feete:
We count these deynties and meates very good,
These be chiefe dishes, and rurall mens foode.

Cornix

Who court frequenteth must loue the dishes sweete,
And lordes dishes to him are nothing mete.
As for our meates they may not eate I thinke,
Because great Lordes may not abide the stinke.
But yet the lordes siege and rurall mens ordure
Be like of sauour for all their meates pure.
As for common meates, of them pleasure is small,
Because one seruice of them continuall
Allayeth pleasure, for voluptuositie
Will haue of dishes chaunge and diuersitie.
And when thou haste smelled meate more delicious,
Thy course dayly fare to thee is tedious.
Nowe iudge Coridon if herein be pleasour,
Me thinke it anguish, sorowe and dolour,
Continuall care and vtter misery,
Affliction of heart, and wretched penury.

But

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But many fooles thinke it is nothing so,
While they see courters outwarde so gayly go.
The courters seruauntes cloth, siluer and golde,
And other like thinges delite they to beholde:
But nought they regarde the inward misery
Which them oppresseth in court continually.
And as saith Seneca, some count them fortunate,
Which outwarde appere well clothed or ornate.
But if thou beheldе their inwarde wretchednes,
Their dayly trouble, their fruitelle busynes:
Then would thou count them both vile and miserable,
Their rowme and office both falle and disceyuable.
For like as men paynt olde walles ruinous,
So be they painted, their like contrarious,
And therfore all they which serue in court gladly
For taste or smelling, or spice of gluttony,
Haue like more wretched then Burges or merchant,
Which with their wiues haue loue and like pleasant.
Shepherdes haue not so wretched liues as they,
Though they liue poorely on cruddes, chese and whey,
On apples, plummes, and drinke clere water deepe,
As it were lordes reigning among their sheepe.
The wretched lazar with clinking of his bell
Hath like which doth the courters lice excell.
The captif begger hath meate and libertie,
When courters hunger in harde captiuitie.
The poore man beggeth nothing hurting his name,
As touching courters, they dare not beg for shame.
And an olde Prouerbe is sayde by men moste sage,
That oft ponge courters be beggers in their age.
Thus all those wretches which do the court frequent,
Bring not to purpose their mindes nor intent.
But if their mindes and will were saciate,
They are not better thereby nor fortunate.
Then all be fooles (concluding with this clause)
Which with glad mindes vse courting for such cause.

Coridon

Nowe truely Cornix, right plainly hast thou tolde
Of court and courters the paynes manyfolde.
And as I suppose there can no more remayne,
Thy wit and councell hath rid me fro great payne.
If I had plentie of treasure and riches,
I should or I went rewarde thy busynes:
But nede oft hurteth good maners commendable.

Cornix.

What man would gladly geue that is not able?
But one abounding in treasure and riches
Is ware in geuing, or yet to make promes.
Thy will is ynough sith that thy store is thin,
I alke of the fore no farther then the skin.
But longe is to night, therfore I shall gladly:

Coridon.

What, more yet declare of courtly misery?
Thou haste tolde ynough by all these croftes ten
Almoste for to choke vp a thousand men.

Cornix

That I promised, right would I should fulfill,
Yet more shall I touche if thou can holde thee still,
I saide first that some (but they be fewen thin)
Resort vnto the court, there soules for to win.
For with great princes while suche men remayne,
They thinke by counsell, by busynes and payne
Chiefely to labour for the vtilitie
Of diuers causes touching the commontie.
Poore men supporting, and children fatherlesse,
And helping widowes also in their distresse,
So much more wening to please our Lord therby,
Because they contende in payne and ieopardy.
Of these must I cure the mindes ignorant,
Which be more fooles then all the remnaunt.
All if they repute themselfe neuer so sage,
Yet shall I proue them selues stuffed with dotage.

Coridon.

Declare that Cornix, that fayne would I heare,
We haue time ynough, yet doth the sunne appere.

Cornix

Of this foresaide sort scant any finde we shall,
But that requireth some lucre temporall:
But neuertheleſſe, nowe fayne we such a one
Which seeketh in court for no promotion,
But onely intende there soules for to win,
And as a champion to fight against sinne.
Should wise men suppose in court so to preuayle?
Lost is their labour, their study and trauayle.
Or should a good man which loueth honestie
Put him in thraldome or in captiuitie
Of princes seruice, his soule to win thereby?
Say men what them list, me thinketh the contrary.
For in court required, so many a sinne and vice,
And so many wayes from vertue to attice,
And so many meanes leading to viciousnes,
That there many a man scant bide in his goodnes.
For as a bad horse resty and stinging
Oft casteth a man though he be well sitting:
In like maner, wise man and rightwise
Resorting to court, descendeth vnto vice,
All if his reason and will also deny,
In court hath the fende such fraude and pollicie,
By meane that vices haue there no punishment,
For lust and lustraunce make mindes insolent.
But sinne and sinners lye dayly so in wayte
Against good liuing to lay their deadly bayte,
That the best liuers from way of grace decline,
By their occasion impelled to ruine:
He falleth in rockes and perill consequent
By force of tempest and windes violent.

Coridon

What man, in court is neither rocke nor sande,
Wilfusely thou speakest to vnderstande.

Cornix

I speake in parable, or by similitude,
Who not perceaueth, his reason is but rude:
But mate Coridon, I tell thee before
That what I shall say or yet haue close in store:
Of diuers authours I learned of Codrus,
And he it learned of Shepherde Siluius.
This Codrus sayde that Plato the great sage
Of Athens court aduerting the outrage,
Purposed rather to flee to follitude,
Then liue in honour among such vices rude.
Then knowe well thy selfe whatsoeuer thou be
Which to sue the court haste thy felicitie.
And note if thy selfe be better then Plato,
Note well the power, if thou haue will also
As well as Plato, ill custome to refrayne,
If thou so thinkest, thou thinkest thing in vayne.
In court must a man sayle after euery winde,
Himselfe conforming to euery mans minde.
Serue euery season, conforme him to the time,
Be common with mo, though it be in some crime.
He must rule nature, and yet he wot not whither,
After the season, nowe hither and nowe thither.
And in his maner he must direct his like,
With heuy persons him must he shewe penlike.
With men at leasure which will them recreate,
He must be iocunde after their vle and rate.

With

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With aged perſons he muſt him haue ſadly,
With youth behaue him iocunde and merily.
With auenterous men which ſeke on crueltie
He muſt ſhewe him bolde and of audacitie.
With liuers beaſtly, inſuing carnall luſt,
Liue lecherouſly forſooth he needes muſt.
And who ſo refuſeth, then is his nature wronge,
He ſhall not in the court vile nor continue longe.
But Coridon, thou might obiect vnto me more,
That the ſayde Plato which fled from court before
Came longe while after, and was in ſeruice
Of Dioniſius the tiraunt of Sillce.
It is as thou ſayeſt, but harken to the ende:
This tirauntes vice while he did reprehende,
All if the tiraunt counted his name diuine,
As vnder colour to folowe his doctrine,
The cruell tiraunt his malice to fulfill,
Solde this ſame Plato maugre his minde and will.
But thus intreated was Plato not alone,
The wrath of princes proued haue many one,
And namely of ſuch as wiſeſt were ywis,
As Zenon murdred by tiraunt Phalaris:
His godly wiſedome, nor honour of his age
Could him not ſuccoure, ſo did the tiraunt rage.
Arracreontes (ſometime of Cipres king)
Slewe Anaragoras for all his great cunning.
And by commaundement of Theodoricus
Without all mercy was ſlayne Boecius.

Coridon

Theſe be farre matters, and thinges very olde.

Cornix

Euen ſuch they be, as Codrus to me tolde.
And yet many mo be counted to me playne
Of worthy clearkes, whom fell princes haue ſlayne.
But all to recount me thinke it is not beſt,
That aſketh leaſure, the Sunne is nere at reſt.
Scant time remayneth to tell that is beſide,
Except we purpoſe here all the night abide.

Coridon

Late at our Churche alley fyr Samplon to me tolde
A tale of Moſes and other Prophetes olde,
Howe the ſame Moyſes, and many of like ſort
To Princes courtes did often time reſort.
He ſaide of Moſes though he of tonge were rude
Left his whole flocke behinde in ſolitude,
And he with Aaron together both did go
On Gods meſſage vnto king Pharao.
Alſo fyr Samplon recounted vnto me
A like narration of Prophete Heliſe.
But Cornix, my minde is muche obliuious,
And longe hiſtoryes to heare be tedious.

Cornix

As touching Moyſes, and many Prophetes mo,
I graunt they were wont to princes for to go:
Theſe men were godly, it folly were to ſay
That all men ſhould haue ſuch priuiledge as they.
Theſe were meſſengers of God of Iſraell,
And finde can we not that they in court did dwell.
But when they had ſayde Gods commaundement,
They left both court and Princes incontinent.
Joſeph alonely abode with Pharao,
Thordinaunce of God had erſt diſpoſed ſo,
To helpe his nation in time after to come
By his prouiſion and maruelous wiſedome.
I graunt thee alſo Mauricius and Martine,
Sebaſtian, George, and other men diuine
Serued in court, and vſed chiualry,
And neuertheleſſe they liued holyly.
But this Mauricius did chriſtned become,
And with his legion receyued martirdome.
Likewiſe Saynt George and Saynt Sebaſtian
Deſpiſing ydoles which courtes vſed then,
Suffered harde death by manifolde torment
For loue and true fayth of God omnipotent.
But during the time, theſe did in the court remayne,
No names of Saintes men gaue to them certayne.
And holy Martin when he was come to age
Gaue ouer the court, and fixed his courage
In Gods ſeruice, remayning ſtedfaſtly,
For he perceyued and knewe right perfitly,
That of poore widowes and children fatherleſſe,
The cauſe not entreth into the court doubtleſſe,
Their matters quealeth, for ſolde is all Juſtice,
And euery ſpeeche of ribauldry and vice:
Alſo in courtes of mercy found is nought,
And of religion no zeale if it were ſought.
Enuy poſſeſſeth the place of charitie,
Onely ambition hath there auctority.
Theſe vices to reſiſt palleth humane doctrine,
Man they ouerrome, except wiſedome diuine.
If God do not ſuccoure, it palleth mans might
With ſuch occaſion continually to fight.
This knewe Saint Martin by ſight continuall,
Yet nought him moued by helpe celeſtiall.
And though he liued in court right holyly,
He would no lenger inſue that chiualry:
Nor leaue example to other men to come,
To liue where reygneth no vertue nor wiſedome.
As when it was aſked of Chriſt our Sauiour,
What ſhould a man do of penaunce or labour,
Or other deedes to win eternall bliſſe,
He had not a man runne to the court ywiſſe,
He ſaide not: go folowe a prince, or Lorde or king,
But go ſell thy riches and other worldly thing:
Deſpiſe all the world and worldly vanitie,
For ſo haue I done, then come and folowe me.
In this cauſe our Lorde hath made no mention
Of folowing the court for vayne promotion.
Then let men take heede though they be vertuous,
Leaſt while they folowe a thing ſo perillous,
In court ſuppoſing their ſoules for to win,
Leaſt there they loſe them by falling into ſinne,
For there be ſnares and giles infinite,
The fende is ready occaſion to excite.
In euery corner ſome enuy ſhalt thou mete,
And ſtumbling ſtones lye hid before thy fete.
Full harde it is there ambition to reſtrayne,
Auarice to ſlake it is a great payne.
To ſome enuy, and wrath to mitigate,
And in occaſion vnclenlynes to hate.
Harde is it dayly to be amonge theſe ſame,
And none of them all thy pleaſure to inflame.
But if there be any which can his luſt ſubdue,
Amonge all vices to kepe them in vertue,
As a precious ſtone cleane in the middes of mire,
Or lye in flames not grieued with the fire:
Or touche ſoft pitche and not his fingers file.
If ſuch one be founde within a thouſand mile,
I will not denye but that he may well ſue
After court, and folowe, not hurting his vertue:
So much more merite ſhall ſuch a man procure,
Howe much more he doth of ieopardie indure.
But this is my minde and ſure opinion,
That ſuch as reſort vnto the court eche one
Be rather ouerrome by ſinne and vicioulnes,
Then they can vices vanquiſh and repres:
For man of his nature is apt to ſinne and vice,
And with great hardnes doth vertue exercile.
Example of children, which if they haue their will
Be leſſe diſpoſed to goodnes then to ill.

I heard

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I heard Minalcas ſing this vnto his drone,
That Scripture ſayth that mankinde is not prone.
In youth and age his pleaſure to inſue,
In ealy luſtes then hardnes of vertue.
Therfore I councell thy ſelfe my Coridon,
Amintas, Codrus, and shepherdes eche one.
And all of other men which will them ſaue fro hell,
That none of them all preſume with court to mell.
For there is the ſoule in ieopardie by crime,
And after like is loſt by ſurfet or due time.
And eyther muſt a man vnto his prince aſſent,
Laugh at his vices and be with them content.
Then loſt is thy ſoule, els his faultes blame,
Then ſhalt thou his ire againſt thee inflame.
As Cirus the king ſometime of Perſy lande
Had one Arpolus chiefe frende of a thouſande
Becauſe Arpolus once blamed his offence,
The wrathfull tiraunt by mad maliuolence
Cauſed Arpolus vnwarely at a feaſte
To eate his children as they like meate were dreſt.
And thus Arpolus to his children was a graue:
For blaming thy prince ſuch reward mayeſt thou haue.
Right ſo Cambiſes in haſtie furour dewe
The ſonne of his frend which was to him moſt true,
Becauſe that his frende him blamed for dronkennes.
Of ſuch examples be many mo doubtleſſe.

Coridon

I haue heard Codrus oft times teſtify
Howe Ariſtotle prince of Philoſophy
Sued the tentes with laude and honour
Of Alexander the mighty conquerour.

Cornix

Thou little knoweſt what cauſed him do ſo,
Or if he freely had libertie to go,
Truely I ſuppoſe it was againſt his heart
And that he might not at libertie depart.
But many other right worthy hye honour
Alſo inſued that mightie conquerour.
As Caliſtenes of hye diſcretion,
And alſo Crito, which was his nurſes ſonne.
And bolde Lichimachus folowed him in fight,
Which was a Philoſopher, and eke a worthy knight.
And many mo els that I can count or tell:
But heare Coridon what vnto theſe befell.
For that Caliſtenes forbad men to honour
Great Alexander as God of moſte valour,
After ſuch cuſtome as was in Perſy lande,
Therfore had he cut from body foote and hande,
His noſe and eares off trenched were alſo,
His eyne out digged for to increaſe his wo:
Then by commaundement of the conquerour
Was thruſt into priſon to bide in more dolour,
Enduring his life there euer to remayne:
But when Liſimachus for to make ſhort this payne
Reached him poyſon, his cruell conquerour
Made him be throwen to lyons to deuour.
And at a banket (as erſt was touched playne)
By Alexander was the ſaide Crito ſlayne,
For blaming of him, becauſe that he did blame
His fathers deedes, Philippus by his name.
Therfore Coridon, after my iudgement,
And as I beleue, thou wilt thereto aſſent.
They all be fooles which ſue to court ſo fore,
For all ſuch cauſes as touched are before.
Or to win ſoules be there content to ſerue,
Their owne ſoule putting in daunger for to ſterue:
For eyther do they ſeeke and hunt about in vayne,
And their deſires there ſhall they not obtayne,
Or that thing they ſeeke, which ſhall do them damage,
Els be they throwen in ſuche a blinde dotage,
That of two wayes they chooſe moſte ieopardous,
All full of thornes and bulynes perillous,
All if they might well to their deſire attayne
By way more ealy, more ſhort and voyde of payne.

Coridon.

O maruelous matter, and well brought to an ende,
I can not be able thy reaſon to commende,
Nor yet to rewarde the thing that thou haſte done,
Though I had riches and wit like Salomon.
Thou haſte me ſaued by councell ſapient
Out of hell mouth and manyfolde torment.
But nowe is it time to drawe to our cotage,
The day is ended, right ſo is our language.

FINIS.

Thus endeth the ſeconde Egloge

of the miſery of courtes
and courtiers.

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Here beginneth the thirde and laſt Egloge of the miſery and behauour of Court and Courtiers.

Coridon

After ſore labour ſweete reſt is delectable,
And after long night day light is comfortable,
And many wordes requireth much drinke,
The throte wel waſhed, the loue the eyn to wink.
This night with me it proued otherwiſe,
I thanke to bedwarde (as is my common giſe:)
But ſuche reſt had I till it was on the morne,
As had my mother the night that I was borne.

Cornix

Of that I maruayle, for thou art wont alway
To ſleepe and to ſnort till time that it be day.
But howe happened this, nowe tell me Coridon,
That thou had this night ſo ſore vexation.

Coridon

I was ſo drenched with dreames, a dread ſo ſore,
I trowe neuer man was troubled ſo before.
Me thought in the court I taken was in trap,
And there ſore handled, God geue it an ill hap.
Me thought the ſcullians like kendes of their lookes
Came ſome with whittels, ſome other with fleſh hokes.
Me thought that they ſtoode eche one about me thicke
With kniues ready for to flay me quicke.
So had I (ſleeping) as much of feare and dreade,
As I ſhould (waking) haue loſt my ſkin in deede.
With ſuch a vilion I troubled was all night,
Wherfore I ioyed what time I ſawe day light.
For as ſoone as euer I heard the birdes peepe,
For feare of dreames no lenger durſt I ſleepe:
But ſtart fro my bed, as lightly was I preſt,
Almoſte as a birde out flyeth from her neſt.
So caught I my male, my battell and my hooke,
And forth with my flocke anone my way I tooke.
But tell me Cornix I pray thee heartyly,
What thing this my dreame may note and ſignify.

Cornix

I dreade leaſt ſome one fulfilled with ill will
Hath heard our talking, and it reported ill.
Which may vs after cauſe rather weepe then ſing,
For ill will maketh the worſt of euery thing.
But then doth one thing well conforte me agayne,
Foraſt men are wont of that to dreame certayne
Wherewith their mindes in walking troubled be:
A ſtrawe for dreames, they be but banitie.
And as for me, I no man diſcommende,
If ſcabbed clawe, the truth ſhall me defende.
But how Coridon, thy head is in thy lap,
What nowe ſo early beginneſt thou to nap?

Coridon

Who hath not ſlept nor reſted all the night
Muſt ſlepe by day, els ſhall his brayne be light.
But Cornix, if thou liſt me for to keepe and wake,
Talke of ſome matters agayne for Gods ſake.
For ſo ſhall the time ouerpaſſe with litle payne,
God knoweth when we ſhall mete after agayne,

Cornix

I graunt Coridon for recreation
Of court yet to haue more communication.

Coridon

All miſery of court thou haſte already tolde.

Cornix

Nay nay Coridon, not by a thouſande folde:
We ſhall haue matter nere till this yeres ende
To talke of Courtes, if I might it intende.
But this one day of part well may we talke,
As for the other I force not, let it walke.

Coridon

Then ſit downe Cornix, leane here againſt this banke,
As for our talking, we get but little thanke.

Cornix

We get as muche almoſt as we deſerue,
I looke for no thanke, nor meate though I ſhould ſterue,
In court ſhall men finde yet many paynes mo,
Some ſhall I touche, let all the other go.
Becauſe that of ſleeping was out firſt commoning,
Heare nowe what paynes haue courtiers in ſleeping.
They oftentime ſleepe full wretchedly in payne,
And lye all the night forth in colde winde and rayne.
Sometime in bare ſtrawe, on bordes, ground or ſtones,
Till both their ſides ake, and all their bones.
And when that one ſide aketh and is wery,
Then turne the other, lo here a remedy.
Or els muſt he riſe and walke him ſelfe a ſpace,
Till time his ioyntes be ſetled in their place.
But if it be fortune thou lye within ſome towne
In bed of fethers, or els of ealy downe.
Then make thee ready for flyes and for gnattes,
For lice, for fleas, punaiſes, miſe and rattes.
Theſe ſhall with biting, with ſtinking, din and ſound
Make thee worſe ealement, then if thou lay on ground.
And neuer in the court ſhalt thou haue bed alone,
Saue when thou wouldeſt moſte gladly lye with one.
Thy ſheetes ſhalbe vncleane, ragged and rent,
Lothly vnto ſight, but lothlyer to cent.
In which ſome other departed late before
Of the peſtilence, or of ſome other ſore.
Such a bedfelowe men ſhall to thee aſſigne,
That it were better to ſlepe among the ſwine.
So foule and ſcabbed, of harde pimples ſo thin,
That a man might grate hard cruſtes on his ſkin.
And all the night longe ſhall he his ſides grate,
Better lye on grounde then lye with ſuch a mate.
One coughyth ſo faſt, anothers breath doth ſtinke,
That during the night ſcant mayeſt thou get a winke.
Sometime a leper is aſſigned to thy bed,
Or with other ſore one grieuouſly beſted.
Sometime thy bedfelowe is colder then is yſe,
To him then he drayweth thy cloathes with a trice.
But if he be hote, by feuers then ſhall he
Caſt all the cloathes and couerlet on thee.

Eyther

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Eyther is thy kelowe alway to thee grieuous,
Or els to him art thou alway tedious.
And sometime these courtiers them more to incumber,
Slepe all in one chamber nere twenty in number.
Then it is great sorowe for to abide their shoute,
Some fart, some flingeth, and other snort and route,
Some boke, and some bable, some commeth dronk to bed,
Some braule and some iangle when they be beastly fed,
Some laugh, and some crye, eche man will haue his wil,
Some spue, and some pisse, not one of them is still.
Neuer be they still till middes of the night,
And then some brawleth and for their beddes fight.
And oft art thou signed to lodge nere the stable,
Then there shalt thou heare of rascoldes a rable.
Sometime shalt thou heare howe they eche other smite,
The neying of the horses, and howe eche other bite.
Neuer shalt thou knowe thy lodging or thy nest,
Till all thy betters be setled and at rest.
In Innes be straungers and gestes many one,
Of courtiers liues make there conclusion.
And where they be knowen of neither man or wife,
Oft time Courtiers there ende their wretched life.
Then shall the hostler be their executour,
Or such other ribaude shall that was his deuour.
Making the Tapster come gay and feate,
His shirt, his doublet or bonet to excheate,
For flesshe that he bought and payde nought therefore,
Then is the extreame, for he shal come no more.
But in a common In if that thou lodge or lye,
Thou neuer canst lay by thy gere so priuily,
But eyther it is stollen, or chaunged with a thought,
And for a good thou haste a thing of nought.
For some arrant thieues shall in the chamber lye,
And while thou sleepest they rise shall priuily:
All if thou thy pouche vnder thy pillowe lay,
Some one crafty searcher thereat shall have assay.
Baudes and brothels, and flattering tapsters,
Jugglers and pipers, and scurup waylarers.
Flatterers and hostlers, and other of this sect
Are busy in thy chamber, chatting with none effect.
With brauling they enter first pagiant to play,
That nought mayest thou here what wiser men do say.
Such is their shouting that scantly thou mayst here,
The secrete kelowe, which by thy side is nere.
But rurall slimmers, and other of our sort
Unto thy lodging, or court when they resort,
They chat, they bable, and all but of the wombe,
More pert and more pieuish then they wold be at home.
Though thou would slepe, induring all the night,
Some sing, some mourne, their lemman out of sight.
Some sing of Belly, and some of Man or cate,
Namely when licour disturbed hath the pate.
The brothell boteman and wretched labourer
Ceasse not to singe, be victayle neuer so dere.
Who can with such haue quietnes or rest,
But if thou with slepe at last be oppresst,
And that sore labours to sleepe thee constrayne,
Rumour thee rayseth, and wakeneth agayne.
On morning when thou might sleepe moste quietly,
Then must thou arise there is no remedy.
For what time thy Lorde vnto his horse is prest,
Then ought no seruaunt lye in his bed at rest.

Coridon

Nowe Cornix I see that with a brauling wife
Better were to bide continuing my life,
And to heare children crying on euery side
Then thus in the court this clamour to abide.

Cornix

No doubt Corydon, but heare more misery,
Which in their lodging haue courtiers commonly.
Men must win the marshall or els herbegere,
With price or with prayer, els must thou stand arere.
And rewarde their knaues must thou if thou be able,
For to assigne thee a lodging tollerable.
And though they promise, yet shall they nought fulfill,
But poynt the place nothing after thy will.
Eyther nere a priuy, a stable or a sinke,
For cent and for clamour where thou can haue no wink.
After thy rewarde they shall thee so manace,
That malgre thy teeth thou must resigne thy place.
And that to some one which is thy enemy,
If they be pleased there is no remedy.
But yet for certayne it were thing tollerable
To becke and to bowe to persons honorable.
As to the marshall, or yet the herbeger,
Or gentle persons which vnto them be nere.
But this is a worke, a trouble and great payne,
Sometime must thou stoupe vnto a rude bilayne.
Calling him master, and oft clawe his hande,
Although thou would see him wauer in a bande.
For if thou liue in court, thou must rewarde this rable,
Cookes and scoliens, and sarmers of the stable.
Butlers and Butchers, prouenders and Bakers,
Porters and poulers, and specially saise takers.
On these and all like spare must thou none expence,
But mekely with mede bye their beneuolence.
But namely of all it is a grieuous payne
To abide the porter, if he be a bilayne.
Howe often times shall he the gates close
Against thy stomake, thy forehead or thy nose.
Howe oftentimes when thy one foote is in
Shall he by malice thrust thee out by the chin.
Sometime his staffe, sometime his clubbishe keete
Shal driue thee backward, and turne thee to the streete.
What he then sayth, comming if he sit,
Howe often times shall he the gates shit.
For very pleasure and ioy of thy comming
The gate he closeth, lo here a pleasaunt thing.
All if thou haste well rewarded him before,
Without thou standest in rayne and tempest sore.
And in the meane time a rascolde or bilayne
Shall enter while thou art bathed in the rayne.
Sometime the porter his malice shall excuse,
And say vnto thee thy labour to abuse:
That eyther is the Lorde asleepe or in councell,
Then lost is thy labour, mispent is thy trauell.

Coridon

Of our poore houses men soone may knowe the gin,
So at our pleasure we may go out and in.
If courtes be suche, me thinketh without doubt,
They best be at ease which so remayne without.
For better be without wet to the skin with rayne,
Then euer in court and liue in endlesse payne.
For if hell gates did not still open gape,
Then wretched soules great torment should escape.
Right so, if the court were close continually,
Some men should escape great payne and misery.
But Cornix proceede, tell on of courtiers care.

Cornix

Well sayde Coridon, God geue thee well to fare.
Nowe would I speake of paynes of the warre,
But that me thinketh is best for to declarre.
For if thy lorde in battayle haue delite
To sue the warre be paynes infinite.
For while he warreth thou mayst not bide at home,
Thy lust to cherishe, and pleasure of thy wombe.
To sue an army then haste thou wretched payne
Of colde or of heate, of thirst, hunger and rayne.
And mo other paynes then I will specify,
For nought is in warfar saue care and misery:

Further

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Murder and mischiefe, rapines and cowardise,
Or els crueltie, there reigneth nought but vice,
Which here to recounte were longe and tedious,
And to our purpose in parte contrarious.
Therfore let passe the warres misery,
The dredefull daungers and wretched penury,
And of these Cities talke we a worde or twayne,
In which no man can liue auoyde of payne,
For whither soeuerr he court remoue or flit
All the vexations remoue alway with it.
If thou for solace into the towne resorte
There shalt thou mete of men as bad a sorte,
Which at thy clothing and thee shall haue disdayne,
If thou be busy the club shall do thee payne,
There be newe customes and actes in like wise,
None mayst thou scorne, nor none of them despise,
Then must thou eche day begin to liue anewe.
As for in Cities I will no more remayne,
But turne my talking nowe to the court agayne,
After of this may we haue communication
Of cities and of their vexation.
Whether that thy lorde sit or yet stande erect
Still muste thou stande or els shalt thou be chekt,
Thy head and legs shall finde no rest nor ease:
If thou in court intende alway to please
Oft muste thou becke, still standе and euer bare
To worse then thy selfe, which is a payne and care.
What shall I common the pensiuenes and payne
Of courtiers or they their wages can obtayne,
Howe muche differing and how much abating
Must courtiers suffer, and manifolde checking,
Neuer hast thou the whole, sometime shall they abate,
Or els shall the day of payment be to late,
From Robert to John sometime they shall thee sende,
And then none of both to paye thee may intende,
From poste vnto piller tolled shalt thou be,
Scorned and blinded with fraude and subtiltie.
Some mayst thou beholde sighing for great sorowe
When he is appoynted to come agayne to morowe,
For many a morowe hath he bene serued so:
Another standeth his heart replete with wo,
Counting and turning the grotes in his cap,
Praying God to sende the payer an ill hap,
For where he reckned for to receyue a pounde
Scant hath he halfe, suche checkes be there founde,
Neuer shall the courtier receyue whole salary
Except that he rewarde the payer priuily.
When nede constrayneth somewhat to haue before,
He gladly receyueth a dosen for a score,
Neuer canst thou make thy couenaunt so cleare
But that the payer shall bring thee far areare,
All if thou right well thy couenaunt fulfill
It shall the payer interprete at his will,
For all that blinde sorte are choked with auarice,
As catchers of coyne ensuing couetise,
But sometime to speake of thinges necessary,
These do all courtiers cares multiply,
Nowe for one thing they labour to obtayne,
Nowe for another, and often all in vayne,
And though their asking be neyther right ne iust,
Yet neuer stint they till they haue had their lust.
But if it fortune their prayer and their cost
Be spent in vayne, then is their reason lost,
Then lurke they in corners for a month or twayne
For wo that their labour and prayer was in vayne.
Some with their princes so stande in fauour
That they may aduaunce their kinred to honour,
But then is their kinred so bad of gouernaunce,
That al if they may they dare not them aduaunce,
But howebeit they durst they dread of worldly shame,
Or punishement of God, or els their princes blame.

Coridon

Nowe doubtles Cornix that man is muche vnwise
Which liketh fooles vnworthy to office,
But oftetime fauour and carnall affection
Abuseth the right, blinding discretion.

Cornix

If thou hadst mused a yere for this one clause
Thou could not haue said more perfitely the cause.
Beside this Corydon sewe, by the lorde aboue,
Haue of these courtiers true, sure and perfite loue,
For Codrus tolde me what writeth Isocrate,
That all these princes and euery great estate
In louing regarde no vertue nor prudence,
None loue they but of some haltie violence,
Without aduisement, without discretion,
Suche loue ofte proueth faynt at conclusion.
But if they loue any they loue him not as frende,
Betwene like and like best frendship shall we finde.
For truely great lordes loue suche men with delite,
By them when they take some pleasour or profite,
As they loue horses, dogges, and no suche,
What saide I, I lye, they loue them not so muche:
More loue they a horse or dogge then a man,
Aske of Minalcas, the truth declare he can.
For commonly as sone as any man is dead
Another is soone ready for to fulfill his stead,
With mede and with prayer his place is dearely bought,
So oft haue princes their seruice cleare for nought:
But then if fortune a dogge or horse to dye,
His place to fulfill another muste they by.
Yet little haue I saide, worse in the court they fare,
Not onely thy lorde shall for thy death nought care,
For thy longe seruice ofte shall he wishe thee dead,
Suche is in court thy salary and thy mede.
Eyther for thy seruice longe and continuall
Thou haste of thy lorde receyued nought at all,
And when thou art dead with short conclusion,
Then quite is thy seruice and obligation,
And ofte shall thy lorde sounde sweetely foorth this A
A that this man so sone is gone away,
If he had liued longer a small season
I should haue put him to great promotion:
Or els if thy lorde haue well rewarded thee,
That thou haste liuelod and riches in plentie,
Then if thou dye beleue me for certayne,
He surely trusteth to haue all agayne:
Scant any riche man by death hence nowe shall fare
But that some great lorde will loke to be his heyre.

Coridon.

That is no leasing but proued often true,
That caused widowes oftentimes sore to rewe,
But this hath bene sene forsooth and euer shall,
That the greater fishe deuoureth vp the small.

Cornix.

A right true example mate Corydon doubtlesse,
So mightie rulers the simple folke oppresse.
But what care in court is, now heare me Corydon,
Concerning thy lorde or maisters owne person:
Of princes or commons thou findest seldome time,
One parfitely good and spotted with no crime,
For all suche thinges as seldome time befall
Tully was wont them monsters for to call,
Then is a good man more monster in dede,
Then is a wether hauing a double head.
And in likewise rehearseth Iuuenall,
That if a man would seke ouer the worlde all,
So many good men vnethes finde should he
As there are gates in Thebes the Citie.

That is to saye vnder the cope of heauen
Of perfite good men scant shall a man finde seuen.
And holy scripture yet speaketh more streitly,
As shepheard Dauid doth clerely testify,
He saide our Lorde beholding on mankind
Could scant one good in all the worlde finde.
Scripture recordeth suche clauses many one,
That men be sinners and God is good alone.

Coridon.

What nowe mate Cornix, I make God auowe,
Thou hast in some friers bosome bene I trowe,
And spoyled some patche of his prechement,
Talke of the court, saue this in store for Lent.

Cornix.

So was my purpose, thou nedest not obiect,
Of our first purpose these wordes haue effect.
I tolde thee before by good aucthoritie
Howe both the poetes and oratours agree,
And holy scripture, that fewe men be perfite,
But bad in number be truely infinite.
So if thy master be bad and worthy blame
Then art thou sory of his dishonest name,
Thy lordes vices and liuing negligent
Shall greue thy stomake if thou be innocent:
It greueth thee if he be couetous or harde,
Because he denieth thy labour to rewarde,
And for many thinges fayle by his negligence,
And fall to ruine for sparing of expence.
Agayne if thy lorde be free and liberall
Alway thou fearest least other men haue all,
His prodigall hande ofte vereth sore thy heart,
Least at the ending nought shall come to thy part,
And least his treasour in folly so he spende
That nothing remayne to helpe him at the ende.
But if he be geuen to wrath and crueltie
Thou fearest least he rage agaynst thy kin or thee,
If he be meke, milde and sober thou art sory,
For he not reuengeth eche hurt and iniury,
If he be hardie then dreadest thou daunger,
When he procedeth then standest thou arere,
If he be a cowarde then haste thou great enuy
Agaynst his enemies, for they continually
Destroy his landes and sore his name distayne,
When he for dread dare do nothing agayne.
If he vse chatting and often be talking,
Well thou perceiuest that while is tong is walking
His priuie counsell he often doth detect,
And muche he speaketh which is of none effect.
If he be secret and still as one in slepe,
Thou sayest he doubteth that none can counsell kepe,
And thee suspecteth as muche as other mo,
Then art thou greued and full of care and wo.
If he loue wines and thou fearest dronkennes,
If he hate wines and thou blamest his sadnes,
And to his body thou countest him nigarde,
Because he would kepe his houholde the more harde,
To Uenus actes if he to muche apply,
Thou sayest he to many doth hurt and iniury,
If he hate women and flee their pleasour, then
Both thou and other reputest him no man.
With fewe men if he vse familiaritie
Thou art displeased of them if thou not be,
If he be common to all indifferent,
Then is thy minde in likewise discontent,
Because he loueth familier to be
To euery person as greatly as with thee,
But if that thy prince be good and thou be nought
Then art thou in likewise sore vexed in thy thought,
Least that he shortly thy seruice may despise,
Because he not liueth after thy lewde gise.
But if both be good and all of vices cleane,
Which is a thing that seldome time is sene,
Then monest thou for that he is not fortunate
As he is ordeyned and after his estate,
Thy heart and minde doth so to him incline
That all his troubles and paynes shall be thine,
For this without doubt I tell thee Coridon,
That no father is so tender ouer his son
As is a good seruaunt diligent and true
Unto a noble prince endued with vertue.
And all if good fortune to him be fauourable,
Yet still thou dredest because it is vnstable.
Thus neuer shalt thou slepe in peace and quietnes,
But when thou wakest thy rest is muche lesse.

Coridon

Because thou recountest of thy fidelitie,
Of maisters and men which loueth honestie,
Nowe I remember the shepheard of the ken,
And what care for him demeaned all his men.
And shepheard Morton when he durst not appeare,
Howe his olde seruauntes were carefull of his chere.
In payne and pleasour they kept fidelitie,
Till grace agayne gaue him authoritie,
Then his olde fauour did them agayne restore
To greater pleasour then they had payne before,
Though for a season this shepheard bode a blast,
The greatest winde yet slaketh at the last,
And at conclusion he and his flocke certayne
Eche true to other did quietly remayne.
My harte sore mourneth when I must specify
Of the gentle Cocke whiche sange so mirily,
He and his flocke were like an vnion,
Conioyned in one without discention,
All the fayre Cockes which in his dayes crewe
When death him touched did his departing rewe,
The prestie palace by him made in the ken,
The maides, widowes, the wiues and the men,
With deadly dolour were pearsed to the heart
When death constrayned this shepheard to departe.
Corne, grasse and fieldes mourned for wo and payne,
For oft his prayer for them obtayned rayne,
The pleasaunt floures for wo faded eche one
When they perceyued this shepheard dead and gone,
The okes, elmes and euery sorte of dere
Shronke vnder shadowes, abating all their chere,
The mighty walles of Ely monastery,
The stones, rockes, and towres semblably,
The marble pillers and images echeone,
Swet all for sorowe when this good cocke was gone,
Though he of stature were humble, weake and leane,
His minde was hye, his liuing pure and cleane,
Where other feedeth by beastly appetite,
On heauenly foode was all his whole delite.
And shortly after this Cocke was dead and gone
The shepheard Roger could not bide long alone,
But shortly after fatle death stole him away,
His worthy reporte yet liueth till thys day.
When shepe wer scabbed this good shepherd was fayne
With easie salues their sores to cure agayne,
He nought pretended nor shewed of rigour,
Nor was no wolfe poore lambes to deuour,
When bushe or brambles pilled the shepes skin,
Then had he pitie and kept them close within,
Or in newe fleces did tenderly them lap,
And with his skirtes did oftentime them hap,
When he departed his flocke for wo was fayne,
The fouldes sounded with dolour and complaynt,
So that their clamour and crye bespred the yle,
His death was mourned from Ely forty mile.
Thele worthy heardes and many other mo
Were with their wethers in loue conioyned so,

That

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That more they cured by witte and patience,
Then dreadfull dyome can do with violence.
Therfore all heardes vnto the wolde I trowe
Should laude their names if vertue reigned nowe,
But sith that cunning and vertue nere be gone
Nowe be they lauded forsooth of fewe or none.
I let thy purpose to make conclusion,
Vice liueth, vertue hath light obliuion,
But speake on Cornix yet is it long to night,
My minde to disclose causeth my heart be light.

Cornix

To laude these pastours wherfore haste thou delite?

Cornix

All other shepheardes to vertue to excite.

Cornix.

Then be thy wordes nothing mispent in vayne,
But nowe to courtes will I returne agayne.
And namely for thou haste spoken of cunning
Me liste a little to common of that thing.
It is to clarkes great pleasour certaynly
And recreation to geue them to studie,
And some finde pleasour and recreation
In secrete study and meditation,
To write or to rede in places solitary,
Whole to the muses his reason to apply,
To talke with Plato, with Tulli or Virgill,
With Aristotle to common at his will,
And other famous doctours many one.

Coridon.

What man, all these long past be dead and gone,
Who would with these dispute, common or talke,
To go where they be shall finde a wery walke.

Cornix

Though they be dead aliue yet is their name,
Their laudes, honour, their hye report of fame,
So men deuiseth to speake with them in dede
As often as they their noble workes rede.
But as for courtiers as well earely as late
Be of this pleasour vtterly priuate,
Though they liue idle their paynes infinite
To godly workes them graunteth no respite,
Alway in clamour remayne they and in preace.
And lewde acquayntaunce will them no time releace,
But if that they chose some season secretly
To some good study their mindes to apply,
To write or to read, anone some wretch is fayne
And glad them to vexe and to disturbe agayne,
But if all other be absent and at rest
Then nere their chamber the kitchin clarke is prest.
Jengling his counters chatting him selfe alone,
Thus seke all corners quiet thou findest none.
So must one despise those noble oratours,
The famous poetes and excellent doctours,
And liue among men auoyde of vertues all,
That rather a man rude beastes may them call.
Of great estates there is a blinded sorte,
Which cause their sonnes vnto the court resorte,
That they may in court themselfe dayly frequent
In learning vertue and maners excellent,
But better might they say to learne all malice,
All curled maners and euery braunch of vice,
As pride, disdayne, enuy and ribaudrie,
So be good maners infect with villanie.
For surely in courtes be men moste vicious,
Supporting vices to vertue contrarious,
Dishonest language is counted most laudable,
One bosteth baudry or gluttony damnable,
No man there vaunteth him selfe of honestie,
Of vertue, maners, of mercy and pitie,
But eyther he ioyeth of his mischeuous life,
To haue defiled a virgin or a wife,
Or els to haue slayne his foe or enemie,
Or fraude committed or crafty felony.
Which curled maners youth sooner doth insue,
Then godly liuing or maners of vertue,
When youth in vices hath fixed their courage,
They by no meanes shall leaue the same in age,
Nor thinke not in court to finde a yonge stripling,
Chast, sober, shamefast or maners ensuing,
All sueth vices, all sue enormitie,
Suche be the disciples as their inkourmers be,
For true is the clause rehearled of Terence,
That youth inclined then namely to offence,
When a lewde master him moued to incline
By ill example to daunger and ruine.
For nature leaneth to all enormitie
When men so vseth which be in dignitie.
Youth thinketh lawfull and but a ioconde fit
Suche vice as elders vse dayly to commit,
And as yong braunches sone rotte and putrify,
So youth corrupteth by vices semblably.

Coridon

Be all yonge galandes of these abused sorte,
Whiche in yonge age vnto the court resorte?

Cornix

Who entreth the court in yong and tender age
Are lightly blinded with folly and outrage,
But suche as entreth of witte and grauitie
Bowe not so soone to suche enormitie,
But or they enter if they haue learned nought
Afterwarde is cunning the least part of their thought,
In court it is counted vice to haue science,
And counted for rebuke for to haue eloquence,
Thus haue men cunning great heauines and payne
Beholding them selues in court had in disdayne,
Their wit despised: in meane time shall they see,
That greatest matters ruled (nay marred) be
Of suche blinde fooles as can not count nor tell
A score saue twentie, yet moste of all suche mell.
But men vnlearned of inwarde payne haue some,
When they beholde that to the court be come
Men groundly learned, in Latin commoning,
The other hearken and vnderstande nothing,
Then truely it is to them a greeuous payne,
But neuertheless of them haue they disdayne.
But liuing in court and flying none offence,
What shall I common what grutch of conscience
Vexeth thee dayly, right small is thy delite
When troubled conscience vnquiet doth thee bite.
No payne is sorer nor greeuonser torment
Then to remember and call to thine intent
Howe many vices, howe great enormitie
Hath thee in thraldome and in captiuitie,
Thine owne conscience is still within thy brest
As tormentour, depriuing thee of rest,
With priuie scourges and payne intollerable,
Recounting thy workes and life abhominable,
Thou mayst not auoyde and from this enemy start,
Flee where thee liketh he resteth in thy heart,
This is of courtiers the deadly tormentour,
With desperation them seking to deuour.
Sometime their conscience grutched is with gile,
With theft, with murther, with lechery some while,
Though their own conscience thus torment thē w̄ payn
To the same offences returne they yet agayne,
Their conscience grutching to cause of grutch they fall,
Thus still them torment the furies infernall,

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I meane remembraunce of manyfolde offence,
Continuall torment by grutche of conscience.
What shall I tell thee the payne of soden feare
Which doth the mindes of courtiers often deare,
Sometime the lower are greeued with threatning,
And suffer paynes when they haue done nothing.
Sometime while the court is daunsing in disport
Or in other solace their heartes to comfort,
Anone commeth in a sodeyn mellangere,
Affirming truely some armed foes nere,
And that same army is neare at hand doubtles,
Then turneth solace to wo and heauines,
And while some princes for pleasour hauke or hunt,
Suche fearefull tidinges to heare ofte are they wont.

Coridon.

Suche feare and daunger doth happen commonly
On all degrees with sodeyn ieopardy,
For plowmen, shepheardes and citizens also
By warre endureth great dammage, losse and wo.

Cornix

All other sortes sometime may stande afarre,
But courtiers must bide all daunger of warre,
Saue losse of goodes, for some haue nought to lose,
But this will I leaue and turne to my purpose.
No gifte is graunted of God vnto mankinde
Better then frendship when man it true may finde,
But ouer all the court no man shall finde nor see
True stedfast frendship nor perfite amitie,
For sith all courtiers for moste parte blinded be
With vicious liuing and all enormitie,
They haue no frendship but conspiration,
And to do misthiefe confederation.
For perfite frendship is when two men agree
Or mo, in working some dede of honestie.
Some courtiers be founde which seme ingenious,
Pregnaunt of reason, wise and laborious,
Yet haue they but shadowe of vertue and goodnes,
And not of vertues the playne signes expres
Some seme liberall, but they ensue rapine,
Some seme very chast, but they to pride incline,
Some semeth humble, which vseth gluttony,
And some familier which leane to lechery,
In none mayst thou see one sparkle of vertue,
But twentie vices shall that one gift ensue.
In suche a meany full of iniquitie
Harde is to finde one worthy amitie,
But if thou in court some honest men awayte
Then with great rulers is he made in conceyt,
If he from conceyt and out of fauour be
Thou mayst not with him haue familiaritie.
Sometime shalt thou see suche drawen to torment
As be thy frendes, faultles and innocent,
And ofte thy enemie in many a fault culpable
Thou shalt in the court see hye and honorable:
To see thy good frende bide death so wrongfully,
To sorowe and nought say is a great payne truely,
But yet for thy life say nought, be pacient,
Not onely whisper least thou haue like torment.
Conuersaunt muste thou be with suche to thy payne
Which haue thy father or els thy brother slayne.
If thou be busy or squaring of language
Thou mayst peraduenture walke in the same passage.
And if thou in court to riches so attende
That thou mayst retreyne men on thee to attende,
Some of thy seruauntes shalt thou oft time beholde
Lewdely disposed to vices manyfolde,
Some shall be theues, some dronkenner then swine,
Some shall loue brauling or to lying encline,
Some slowe, some gluttons, some fall to ribaudry,
Aduoutry, murther, with other villany.
Some be forgetfull, some peart, some insolent,
Some craftles fooles, some proude and negligent,
If thou chaunge, some better for to haue,
Thou voydest a lubber and hast agayne a knaue,
And if thou haue one with knauishenes infect,
Then all the other shall folowe the same secte.
Agayne if thy selfe be poore and a seruaunt,
Thou shalt finde thy master rashe, rude and ignoraunt,
Alway complayning, and neuer well content,
Ofte asking seruice, in paying negligent,
Of speche superflue, hastie and rigorous,
Enuious, dronken, vnstable and couetous.
Thus seruaunt, master, gentleman and villayne,
Liue all in court with misery and payne.

Coridon

Nowe truely Cornix this is a wretched life,
Voyde of all pleasour, wrapped in payne and strife.

Cornix

Count all the rowmes and offices echeone,
And none shalt thou finde without vexation,
What thinke the counsell when princes not agree
To their aduisement of moste vtilitie?
What haue Chauncelers of inwarde displeasour
When their letters written to their princes honour,
For the common weale and sure vtilitie,
Can not passe forwarde till they transposed be
From good to right nought, corrupt for correct?
What thinke comtrollers when they be dayly chekt,
The rulers of court, vsher and seneschall,
Treasorers, clerkes, and euery marthall,
What payne haue these echeone in his office,
When often ribaudes them sclaunder and despise,
Or some busy body hauing but small insight
Comptroll their countes be they neuer so right?
What payne haue chaplens comptrolled in seruice,
And phisitians when some their arte despise?
What knightes, trompeters and souldiers commonly,
When treasorers their wages doth deny?
What payne haue cookes whiche scant maye seeth their beke
Without some rebuke, a checke or a reprefe?
Coridon in court no roume is trust thou me,
But that is wrapped in great aduersitie,
But briefly to say and make conclusion,
Right wise men suffer great tribulation
The heauenly pleasour to purchase and obtayne,
More suffreth courtiers to purchase endles payne.
I mell not with them which of necessitie
Agayne their pleasour must in the court be
As busy suters to purchase droit and right,
Which would be thence right gladly if they might.

Coridon

Beleue me Cornix thou turned hast my minde,
Farewell all courting, adewe pleasour vnkinde,
Thou playne hast proued that all they fooles be
Which folowe the court seking captiuitie,
And might els where an honest life purchase,
Hauing sufficiaunce and moderate solace.

Cornix

Then let all shepheardes from hence to Salisbury,
With eatle riches liue well, laugh and be mery,
Pipe vnder shadowes, small riches hath most rest,
In greatest seas moste sorest is tempest.
The court is nought els but a tempestious sea,
Auoyde the rockes, be ruled after me,
There is more daunger then is vppon the lande,
As swalowes, rockes, tempest and quicke sande.
Mayemaydes singing, abusing with their song,
Caribdis, Scylla, and sandy bankes longe,

In

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In it be cliffes of hardeſt Adamant
To ſinne exciting yonge fooles ignorant.
What ſhepheard loueth peace and tranquilitie,
Or reſt requireth to liue in vnitie,
Swete peace of heart who euer doth require,
Or health of his ſoule if any man deſire,
Flee from the court, flee from the court I crye,
Flee proude beggery and ſolemne miſerye.
For there is no reſt nor godly exercile,
No loue of vertue, but vſe of euery vice,
As auarice, luſt, and beaſtly gluttony,
Crueltie, malice, ambition and enuy:
But namely Venus or luſte venerall,
To hir vile actes playnly ſubdueth all,
Vpon which vices who fixeth his intent
Him ſelfe to defende hath he no argument,
But that of all wiſe men, honeſt and laudable,
He ſhalbe couict of liuing reprouable,
A naturall foole of reaſon dull and rude,
Prokace Coridon, thus do I here conclude.

Coridon

Conclude mote thy life in bleſſed ſtate of grace
Mine owne heart Cornix for this thy good ſolace,
But haſte thou touched all whole and perfitely
Of court and courtiers the payne and miſery.

Cornix

Nay, nay Coridon, I tolde thee ſo before,
Muche haue I tolde, behinde is muche more,
Their inwarde crimes and vice abhominable,
Their outwarde raging in ſinnes deteſtable,
Their theft and fraudes, and their extortion,
And of miſliuers their ſupportation,
Their dayly murther and kylling of women,
Frauding of virgins, pilling of ſimple men,
Aduoutry, inceſt and fornication,
And of good virgins the deflouration.
Theſe and ſuche like dare I not playnly touche,
For all theſe crolles and ſiluer in my pouche.

Coridon

Then haſte we hence the ſonne is nere at reſt,

Cornix

Take vp thy baggage my mate that now is beſt.

Coridon

But tell me Cornix one thing or we departe,
On what maner life is beſt to ſet my harte?
In court is combraunce, care, payne and miſery,
And here is enuy, ill will and penury.

Cornix

Sufferaunce ouercommeth all malice at the laſt,
Weake is that tree which can not bide a blaſt,
But heare nowe my counſell I bid thee finally,
Liue ſtill a ſhepheard for playnly ſo will I.

Coridon

That ſhall I Cornix thy good counſell fulfill,
To dye a ſhepheard eſtabliſhed is my will.

Cornix

So do, or after thou often ſhalt repent,
Poore life is ſureſt, the court is but torment.

Coridon

Adewe ſwete Cornix, departing is a payne,
But mirth reneweth when louers mete againe.

Thus endeth the thirde and laſte Egloge of the miſeries of Courtes and Courtiers.

The fourth Egloge of Alexander Barclay,

entituled Codrus and Minalcas, treating of the behauour of Riche men agaynſt Poetes.

The Argument.

COdrus a ſhepheard luſty, gay and ſtoute,
Sat with his wethers at paſture round about,
And poore Minalcas with ewes ſcarſe fourtene
Sat ſadly muſing in ſhadowe on the grene.
This luſtie Codrus was cloked for the rayne,
And doble decked with huddes one or twayne,
He had a pautner with purſes manyfolde,
And ſurely lined with ſiluer and with golde,
Within his wallet were meates good and fine,
Both ſtore and plentie had he of ale and wine,
Suche fulſome paſture made him a double chin,
His furred mittins were of a curres ſkin,
Nothing he wanted longing to cloth or foode,
But by no meane would he depart with good.
Sometime this Codrus did vnder ſhadowe lye
Wide open piping and gaping on the ſkye,
Sometime he daunced and hobled as a beare,
Sometime he pried howe he became his geare,
He lept, he ſonge, and ran to proue his might,
When purſe is heauy oftetime the heart is light.
But though this Codrus had ſtore inough of good,
He wanted wiſedome, for nought he vnderſtood
Saue worldly practiſe his treaſour for to ſtore,
Howe euer it came ſmall force had he therfore.
On the otherſide the poore Minalcas lay,
With empty belly and ſimple poore aray,
Yet coulde he pipe and ſinger well a drone,
But loure is muſike when men for hunger grone.
Codrus had riches, Minalcas had cunning,
For God not geueth to one man euery thing.
At laſt this Codrus eſpied Minalcas,
And ſoone he knewe what maner man he was,
For olde acquayntaunce betwene them earſt had bene.
Long time before they met vpon the grene,
And therfore Codrus downe boldly by him ſat,
And in this maner began with him to chat,

FINIS.

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Codrus first speaketh.

AL hayle Minalcas, nowe by my fayth well met,
Lorde Jesu mercy what troubles did thee let,
That this long season none could thee here espy?
With vs was thou wont to sing full merily,
And to lye piping oftetime among the floures,
What time thy beastes were feding among ours.
In these olde valleys we two were wont to bourde,
And in these shadowes talke many a mery worde,
And oft were we wont to wrastle for a fall,
But nowe thou droupest and hast forgotten all.
Here wast thou wont swete balades to sing,
Of song and ditie as it were for a king,
And of gay matters to sing and to endite,
But nowe thy courage is gone and thy delite,
Trust me Minalcas nowe playnly I espy
That thou art wery of shepheardes company,
And that all pleasour thou semest to despise,
Lothing our pasture and fieldes in likewise,
Thou fleest solace and euery mery fitte,
Leasing thy time and sore hurting thy witte,
In sloth thou slombrest as buried were thy song,
Thy pipe is broken or somwhat els is wrong.

Minalcas

What time the Cuckowes fethers mout and fall,
From sight she lurketh, hir song is gone withall,
When backe is bare and purse of coyne is light,
The wit is dulled and reason hath no might:
Adewe enditing when gone is libertie,
Enemie to Muses is wretched pouertie,
What time a knight is subiect to a knaue
To iust or tourney small pleasour shall he haue.

Codrus.

What no man thee kepeth here in captiuitie,
And buly labour subdueth pouertie,
And oft it is better and much surer also
As subiect to obey then at freewill to go,
As for example beholde a wanton colte
In raging youth leapeth ouer hill and holte,
But while he skippeth at pleasure and at will
Otte time doth he fall in daunger for to spill,
Sometime on stubbes his hokes sore he teares,
Or fals in the mud both ouer head and eares,
Sometime all the night abrode in hayle or rayne,
And oft among briers tangled by the mayne,
And other perils he suffreth infinite,
So mingled with sorowe is pleasour and delite:
But if this same colte be broken at the last,
His sitter ruleth and him refraynerh fast,
The spurre him pricketh, the bridle doth him holde,
That he can not praunce at pleasour where he wolde,
The rider him ruleth and saueth from daunger.
By which example Minalcas it is clere
That freewill is subiect to inconuenience,
Where by subiection man voydeth great offence,
For man of him selfe is very frayle certayne,
But ofte a ruler his folly doth refrayne,
But as for thy selfe thou hast no cause pardie,
To walke at pleasour is no captiuitie.

Minalcas

Seest thou not Codrus the fieldes rounde about
Compaled with floudes that none may in nor out,
The muddy waters nere choke me with the stinke,
At euery tempest they be as blacke as inke:
Pouertie to me should be no discomforte
If other shepheardes were all of the same sorte.
But Codrus I clawe oft where it doth not itche,
To see ten beggers and halfe a dosen riche,
Truely me thinketh this wrong partition,
And namely sith all ought be after one.
When I first beheld these fieldes from a farre,
Me thought them pleasant and voyde of strife or warre,
But with my poore flocke approching nere and nere
Alway my pleasour did selle and selle appeare,
And truely Codrus since I came on this grounde
Oft vnder floures vile snakes haue I founde,
Adders and todes and many fell serpent,
Infecte olde shepe with venim violent,
And ofte be the yonge infected of the olde,
That vnto these fewe nowe brought is all my folde.

Codrus

In some place is neyther venim nor serpent,
And as for my selfe I fele no greuous sent.

Minalcas

It were great maruell where so great grounde is sene,
If no small medowe were pleasaunt, swete and clene,
As for thee Codrus I may beleue right weele,
That thou no sauour nor stinke of mud dost feele,
For if a shepheard hath still remayned longe
In a foule prison or in a stinking gonge,
His pores with ill ayre be stopped so echeone
That of the ayre he feleth small sent or none,
And yet the dwellers be badder then the place,
The riche and sturdie doth threaten and manace
The poore and simple and suche as came but late,
And who moste knoweth him moste of all they hate,
And all the burthen is on the Alles backe,
But the stronge Caball standeth at the racke.
And suche be alligned sometime the flocke to kepe
Which scant haue so muche of reason as the shepe,
And euery shepheard at other hath enuy,
Scant be a couple which loueth perfitely,
Ill will so reygneth that brauling be thou sure,
Constrayned me nere to seke a newe pasture,
Saue onely after I hope of better rest,
For small occasion a birde not chaungeth nest.

Codrus

Welere thou graunted that in a large grounde
Some plot of pleasour and quiet may be founde,
So where of heardes assembled is great sorte,
There some must be good, then to the best resorte.
But leaue we all this, turne to our poynt agayne,
Of thy olde balades some would I heare full fayne,
For often haue I had great pleasour and delite
To heare recounted suche as thou did endite.

Minalcas

Yea, other shepheardes which haue inough at home,
When ye be mery and stuffed is your wombe,
Which haue great store of butter, chese and woll,
Your cowes others of milke replete and full,
Payles of swete milke as full as they be able,
When your fat dishes smoke hote vpon your table,
Then laude ye songes and balades magnifie,
If they be mery or written craftily,
Ye clappe your handes and to the making harke,
And one say to other, lo here a proper warke.
But when ye haue saide nought geue ye for our payne,
Saue onely laudes and pleasaunt wordes vayne,
All if these laudes may well be counted good,
Yet the poore shepheard must haue some other food.

Codrus.

Wayst thou not sometime thy folde and shepe apply,
And after at leasour to liue more quietly,
Dispose thy wittes to make or to endite,
Renouncing cures for time while thou dost wite.

Minalcas

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Minalcas

Nedes muſt a Shepheard beſtowe his whole labour
In tending his flockes, ſcant may he ſpare one houre:
In going, comming, and often them to tende,
Full lightly the day is brought vnto an ende.
Sometime the wolues with dogges muſt he chace,
Sometime his foldes muſt he newe compace:
And oft time them chaunge, and if he ſtormes doubt,
Of his shepecote dawbe the walles round about:
When they be broken, oft times them renue,
And hurtfull paſtures note well, and them eſchue.
Bye ſtrawe and litter, and hay for winter colde,
Oft greale the ſcabbes alwell of yonge as olde.
For dreade of thieues oft watche vp all the night,
Beſide this labour with all his minde and might,
For his poore houſholde for to prouide vitayle,
If by aduenture his wooll or lambes fayle.
In doing all theſe no reſpite doth remayne,
But well to indite requireth all the brayne.
I tell thee Codrus, a ſtile of excellence
Muſt haue all laboure and all the diligence.
Both theſe two workes be great, nere importable
To my ſmall power, my ſtrength is muche vnable.
The one to intende ſcant may I bide the payne,
Then is it harder for me to do both twayne.
What tune my wittes be clere for to inuite,
My dayly charges will graunt me no reſpite:
But if I folowe, inditing at my will,
Eche one diſdayneth my charges to fulfill.
Though in theſe fieldes eche other ought ſuſtayne,
Cleane loſt is that lawe, one may require in vayne:
If coyne commaunde, then men count them as bounde,
Els flee they labour, then is my charge on grounde.

Codrus

Cornix oft counted that man ſhould flee no payne,
His frendes burthen to ſuppoyte and ſuſtayne:
Feede they thy flocke, while thou doeſt wryte and ſing,
Eche hoyſe agreeth not well for euery thing.
Some for the charet, ſome for the cart or plough,
And ſome for hakneyes, if they be light and tough.
Eche fielde agreeth not well for euery ſeede,
Who hath moſte labour is worthy of beſt mede.

Minalcas

After inditing then gladly would I drinke,
To reache me the cup no man doth care ne thinke:
And oft ſome fooles voyde of diſcretion
Me and my matters haue in deriſion.
And meruayle is none, for who would ſowe that fielde,
With coſtly ſeedes, which ſhall no fruites yelde.
Some wanton body oft laugheth me to ſcorne,
And ſaith: Minalcas, ſee howe thy pilche is torne,
Thy hoſe and cokers be broken at the knee,
Thou canſt not ſtumble, for both thy ſhone may ſee.
Thy beard like briſtles, or like a porpos ſkin,
Thy cloathing sheweth, thy winning is but thin:
Such mocking tauntes renueth oft my care,
And nowe be woods of fruit and leaues bare.
And froſtie winter hath made the fieldes white,
For wrath and anger my lip and tonge I bite:
For dolour I droupe, ſore vexed with diſdayne,
My wombe all waſteth, wherfore I bide this payne:
My wooll and wethers may ſcarſly feede my wombe,
And other houſholde which I retayne at home.
Leane be my lambes, that no man will them bye,
And yet their dammes they dayly ſucke ſo dry,
That from the vthers no licoure can we wring,
Then without repaſt who can indite or ſing.
It me repenteth, if I haue any wit,
As for my ſcience, I wery am of it.
And of my poore like I weary am, Codrus,
Sith my harde fortune for me diſpoſeth thus,
That of the ſtarres and planettes eche one
To poore Minalcas well fortunate is none.
Knowen is the truth if it were clerely ſought,
That nowe to this time I ſtill haue longe for nought:
For youth is luſty, and of ſmall thing hath nede,
That time to age men geue no force nor heede.
Ages condition is greatly contrary,
Which nowe approcheth right ſtill and craftyly,
But what time age doth any man oppreſſe,
If he in youth haue gathred no riches:
Then paſſeth age in care and pouertie,
For nede is grieuous with olde infirmitie:
And age is kered oft time with care and neede,
When ſtrength is faded and man hath nought to feede,
When ſtrength is faded, then hope of gayne is gone,
In youthes ſeaſon to make prouiſion.
The litle Emmet is wiſe and prouident,
In ſummer working with labour diligent,
In her ſmall caues conueying corne and grayne
Her life in Winter to nouriſh and ſuſtayne:
And with her ſmall mouth is buſy it cutting,
Leaſt in her caues the ſame might growe or ſpring.
So man of reaſon himſelfe reputing ſage,
In youth ſhould purſuey, to liue theron in age.

Codrus

Men ſay that clerkes which knowe Aſtronomy,
Knowe certayne ſtarres which longe to deſteny:
But all their ſaying is nothing veritable,
Yet heare the matter, though it be but a fable.
They ſay that Mercury doth Poetes fauoure,
Under Jupiter be princes of honour:
And men of riches, of wealth or dignitie,
And all ſuch other as haue auctoritie:
Mercury geueth to Poetes laureate
Goodly conueyaunce, ſpeeche pleaſaunt and ornate.
Inuentike reaſon to ſing or play on harpe,
In goodly ditie or balade for to carpe.
This is thy lot, what ſeekeſt thou riches?
No man hath all, this thing is true doubtleſſe.
God all diſpoſeth as he perceyueth beſt,
Take thou thy fortune, and holde thee ſtill in reſt:
Take thou thy fortune, and holde thy ſelfe content,
Let vs haue riches and rowmes excellent,

Minalcas

Thou haſte of riches and goodes haboundaunce,
And I haue ditties and ſonges of pleaſaunce:
To alke my cunning to couetous thou art,
Why is not thy ſelfe contented with thy part,
Why doeſt thou inuade my part and portion,
Thou wanteſt (Codrus) wit and diſcretion.

Codrus

Not ſo Minalcas, forſooth thou art to blame,
Of wronge inuaſion to geue to me the name.
I would no ditie nor ballade take thee fro,
No harpe nor armes which long to Apollo:
But onely, Minalcas, I fore deſire and longe
To geue mine eares to thy ſweete ſounding long.
It feedeth hearing, and is to one pleaſaunt,
To heare good reaſon and ballade conſonant.

Minalcas.

If thou haue pleaſure to heare my melody,
I graunt thee Codrus to ioy my armony,
So haue I pleaſure and ioy of thy riches,
So gifres doubled increaſeth loue doubtleſſe.

Codrus.

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Codrus

He of my riches hath ioy which loueth me,
And who me hateth, nothing content is he.
Enuious wretches by malice commonly
Take others fortune and pleasure heauyly.

Minalcas

In likewise mayst thou inioy of our science,
And of our Muses though thou be fro presence:
And of our cunning thou ioyest semblably,
If nought prouoke thee by malice and enuy.
If I keepe thy eares, keepe thou my mouth agayne,
I loth were to spende my giftes all in vayne.
Meate vnto the mouth is foode and sustenaunce,
And songes keepe the eares with pleasaunce.
I haue the Muses, if thou wilt haue of mine,
Then right requireth that I haue part of thine.
This longeth to loue, to nourish charitee,
This keepeth pitie, this doth to right agree.
This is the pleasure and will of God aboue,
Of him disposed for to ingender loue.
All pleasaunt giftes one man hath not pardie,
That one of other should haue necessitie.
No man of him selfe is sure sufficient,
This is prouision of God omnipotent.
That one man should neede anothers assistence,
Thereby is ioyned loue and beneuolence.
Englande hath cloth, Burdeus hath store of wine,
Cornewall hath tinne, and lymster wools fine.
London hath scarlet, and Bristowe pleasaunt red,
Fen lande hath fishes, in other place is lead.
This is of our Lorde disposed so my brother
Because all costes should one haue neede of other.
So euery tree hath fruit after his kinde,
And diuers natures in beastes may we finde.
Alway when nature of thing is moste laudable,
That thing men counteth most good and profitable.
And euery person in his owne gift hath ioy
The foole in his bable hath pleasure for to toy.
The clerke in his bookes, the merchaunt in riches,
The knight in his horse, harnes and hardynes.
But euery person of his giftes and art,
When nede requireth should gladly geue some part.
Such meane conioyneth in bonde of loue certayne,
Englande and Fraunce, Scotlande, Grece and Spain.
So hast thou Codrus of golde ynough in store,
And I some cunning, though fewe men care therfore.
Thou art beholden to Iupiter truely,
And I beholden to pleasaunt Mercury.
Ioyne we our starres, let me haue part of thine,
Concorde to cherishe, thou shalt haue part of mine.
Make thou Iupiter be frendly vnto me,
And our Mercury shalbe as good to thee.
If thy Iupiter geue me but onely golde,
Mercury shall geue thee giftes manyfolde.
His pillion, scepter, his winges and his harpe,
If thou haue all these thou mayst grathly carpe.
And ouer all these geue thee shall Mercury
The knot of Hercules inlaced craftyly.

Codrus

Lorde God, Minalcas, why haste thou all this payne
Thus vaile to forge so many wordes in vayne.

Minalcas

That vayne thou counteſt which may hurt or inielle
Thy loued treasure, or minishe thy riches:
If thou wilt harken or heare my Muses sing,
Refreshe my mindes with confort and liking,
Rid me fro troubles and care of bulynes,
Confort my courage which nowe is comfortlelle.
A clerke or poete combined with a boye,
To haunt the Muses or wite hath litle ioye.
The wit and reason is dull or of valour
Like as the body is called to honour.
When duly charges causeth a man to grone,
The wit then slumbreth, and Muses all be gone.
A ditie will haue minde quiet and respite,
And ease of stomake, els can none well indite,
I sighe, I slumber, care troubleth oft my thought,
When some by malice mine art setteth at nought.
I bewle as a kite for hunger and for golde,
For thought and study my youth appereth olde:
My skin hath wrinkles and pimples round about,
For colde and study I dreade me of the gowte.
When sickenes commeth then like hath breuitie
By kalle vnkindnes and wretched pouertie.
If men were louing, benigne and charitable,
Then were pouertie both good and tollerable:
But since charitie and pitie both be gone,
What should pouertie remayne behinde alone.
No man hath pitie, eche dayneth me to keepe,
I lost haue confort, but still remayneth neede:
I haue no wethers nor ewes in my folde,
No siluer in purle, I knowe not what is golde:
No corne on the grounde haue I whereon to fare,
Then would thou haue me to liue auoyde of care.
Nay nay frende Codrus, trust me, I thee allure
Such maner salues can not my dolour cure.
Make thou me iocunde, helpe me with cloth and foode,
Clothe me for winter with pilche, felt and hoode.
Auoyde all charges, let me sit in my cell,
Let worldly wretches with worldly matters mell.
Succoure my age, regarde my heares gray,
Then shalt thou proue and see what thing I may:
Then shalt thou finde me both apt to write and sing,
Good will shall fulfill my scarcenes of cunning,
A plentifull house out chaseth thought and care,
Soiourne doth sorowe there where all thing is bare,
The seller couched with bere, with ale or wine,
Add meates ready when man hath lust to dine.
Great barnes full, fat wethers in the folde,
The purse well stuffed with siluer and with golde.
Fauour of frendes, and suche as loueth right
All these and other do make thee full light,
Then is it pleasure the yonge maydens amonge
To watche by the fire the winters nightes longe:
At their bonde tales to laugh, or when they hyall,
Great fire and candell spending for laboure small,
And in the ashes some playes for to marke,
To couer wardens for fault of other warke.
To toste white sheuers, and to make prophitroles,
And after talking oft time to fill the bowles.
Where wealth aboundeth without rebuke or crime,
Thus do some heardes for pleasure and paſtime:
As fame reporteth, such a Shepherde there was,
Which that time liued vnder Mecenas.
And Titerus (I trowe) was this shepherdes name,
I well remember aliue yet is his fame.
He longe of fieldes and tilling of the grounde,
Of shepe, of oxen, and battayle did he sounde.
So shrill he sounded in termes eloquent,
I trowe his tunes went to the firmament.
The same Mecenas to him was free and kinde,
Whose large giftes gaue confort to his minde:
Also this Shepherde by heauenly influence
I trowe obtayned his perelelle eloquence.
We other Shepherdes be greatly different,
Of common sortes, leane, ragged and rent.
Fed with rude frowsle, with quacham, or with crudd,
Or slimy kempes ill smelling of the mud.
Such rusty meates inblindeth so our brayne,
That of our fauour the muſes haue disdayne:

And

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And great Apollo deſpiſeth that we write,
For why rude wittes but rudely do indite

Codrus.

I truſt on fortune, if it be fauourable,
My truſt fulfilling, then ſhall I well be able
Thy neede to ſuccoure, I hope after a thing,
And if fortune fall well after my liking,
Truſt me Minalcas, I ſhall deliuer thee
Out of this trouble, care and calamitie.

Minalcas

A Codrus Codrus, I would to God thy will
Were this time ready thy promiſe to fulfill
After the power and might that thou haſte nowe.
Thou haſte ynough for both, man God auowe.
If thy good minde according with thy might,
At this time preſent thou ſhould my heart well light.
I aſke not the ſtore of Colmus or Capell,
With ſilken robes I couete not to mell.
No kinges diſhes I couete nor deſire,
Nor riche mantels, or palles wrought in Tire:
No cloth of golde, of Tillue nor veluet,
Damaſke nor Sattin, nor orient Scarlet.
I aſke no value of Peters coſtly cope,
Shield of Minerua, nor patin of Elope.
I aſke no palace, nor lodging curious,
No bed of ſtate, of rayment ſumptuous.
For this I learned of the Dean of Powles,
I tell thee Codrus, this man hath won ſome ſoules.
I aſke no treaſure nor ſtore of worldly good,
But a quiet life, and onely cloth and foode,
With homely lodging to keepe me warme and drye
Enduring my life, forſooth no more aſke I.
If I were certayne this liuing ſtill to haue,
Auoyde of trouble, no more of God I craue.

Codrus

This liuing haſte thou, what needeſt thou complayne,
Nothing thou wanteſt which may thy life ſuſtayne:
What keele man, pardie thy chekes be not thin,
No lacke of vitayle cauſeth a double chin.

Minalcas.

Some beaſt is luſtie and fat of his nature,
Though he fore laboure, and go in bad paſture.
And ſome beaſt agayne ſtill leane and poore is ſeene,
Though it fatly fare within a medowe greene.
Though thou would (Codrus) ſtil argue til to morow,
I licke no diſhes which ſauced be with ſorowe.
Better one ſmall diſh with ioy and heart liking
Then diuers daynties with murmure and grutching,
And men vnlearned can neuer be content,
When ſcolers common, and clerkes be preſent.
Alloone as clerkes begin to talke and chat,
Some other glowmes, and hath enuy thereat.
It is a torment a clerke to ſit at borde,
And of his learning not for to talke one worde.
Better were to be with clerkes with a cruſt,
Then at ſuch tables to fare at will and luſt.
Let me haue the borde of olde Pithagoras,
Which of temperaunce a very father was.
Of Philoſophers the moderate riches,
In youth or age I loued neuer exceſſe.
Some boaſt and promiſe, and put men in conſort
Of large giftes, moſte men be of this ſort,
With mouth and promiſe for to be liberall,
When nede requireth, then geue they nought at all.
All onely in thee is fixed all my truſt,
If thou fayle promiſe then rowle I in the duſt,
My hope is faded, then ſhall my ſonge be dom
Like a Nightingale at the ſolſtitium.

If thou fayle promiſe, my comfort cleane is loſt,
Then may I hange my pipe vpon the poſte:
Shet the ſhopwindowes for lacke of marchaundice,
Or els for becauſe that ealy is the price.

Codrus

Minalcas, if thou the court of Rome haſte ſeene,
With forked cappes or els if thou haſte beene,
Or noble Prelates by riches excellent,
Thou well perceyueſt they be magnificent.
With them be clerkes and pleaſaunt Oratours,
And many Poetes promoted to honours,
There is aboundaunce of all that men deſire,
There men hath honour before they it require:
In ſuch fayre fieldes without labour or payne
Both wealth and riches thou lightly mayſt obtayne.

Minalcas

Thou art abuſed, and thinkeſt wrong doubtleſſe
To thinke that I am deſirous of riches.
To feede on rawe fleſhe it is a wolues giſe,
Wherfore he weneth all beaſtes do likewiſe.
Becauſe the blinde man halteth and is lame,
In minde he thinketh that all men do the ſame.
So for that thy ſelfe deſireſt good in ſtore,
All men thou iudgeſt infected with like fore.
Codrus, I couet not to haue aboundaunce,
Small thing me pleaſeth, I aſke but ſuffiſaunce.
Graunt me a liuing ſufficient and ſmall,
And voyde of troubles, I aſke no more at all.
But with that litle I holde my ſelfe content,
If cauſe of ſorowe my mindes not torment.
Of the court of Rome forſooth I haue heard tell,
With forked cappes it folly is to mell.
Miceus and Morton be dead and gone certayne,
They, nor their like ſhall neuer returne agayne.
O Codrus Codrus, Auguſtus and Edwarde
Be gone for euer, our fortune is more harde.
The ſcarlet robes in longe haue ſmall delite,
What ſhould I trauayle, in Rome is no profite.
It geueth mockes and ſcornes manyfolde,
Still catching coyne, and gaping after golde,
Fraude and diſceyte doth all the world fill,
And money reygneth and doth all thing at will.
And for that people would more intende to gile,
Vertue and truth be driuen into exile.
We are commaunded to truſt for time to come
Till care and ſorowe hath walked our wiſedome.
Hope of rewarde hath Poetes them to feede,
Nowe in the worlde fayre wordes be their mede.

Codrus

Then write of battayles, or actes of men bolde,
Of mightie princes, they may thee well vpholde,
Theſe worthy rulers of fame and name royall
Of very reaſon ought to be liberall.
Some ſhalt thou finde betwene this place and Kent,
Which for thy labour ſhall thee right well content.

Minalcas

Yea, ſome ſhall I finde which be ſo prodigall,
That in vayne thinges ſpende and cleane waſteth all:
But howe ſhould that man my pouertie ſuſtayne,
Which nought reſerueth his honoure to mayntayne.
For auncient bloud nor auncient honoure
In theſe our dayes be nought without treaſure.
The coyne auaunceth, neede doth the name deiect,
And where is treaſure olde honour hath effect.
But ſuch as be riche and in promotion
Shall haue my writing but in deriſion.
For in this ſeaſon great men of excellence
Haue to poemes no greater reuerence,

Then

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Then to a brothell or els a brothelhoule,
Mad ignorraunce is so contagious.

Codrus

It is not leming a Poet thus to iest
In wrathfull speeche, nor wordes dishonest.

Minalcas

It is not iesting, be thou neuer so wroth,
In open language to say nothing but troth:
If peraduenture thou would haue troth kept still,
Prouoke thou not me to anger at thy will.
When wrath is moued, then reason hath no might,
The tonge forgetteth discretion and right.

Codrus

To moue thy minde I truely were full lothe,
To geue good councell is farre from being wroth.

Minalcas

As touching councell, my minde is plentifull,
But neede and troubles make all my reason dull,
If I had councell and golde in like plentie,
I tell thee Codrus, I had no neede of thee.
Howe should a Poet, poore, bare and indigent,
Indite the actes of princes excellent,
While scant is he worth a knife his pipe to mende,
To rounde the holes, to clense or picke the ende.
Beholde, my whittle almoste hath lost the blade,
So long time past is sith the same was made:
The hast is buried, the blade not worth a strawe,
Rusty and toothed, not much vnlike a sawe.
But touching this hurt, it is but light and small,
But care and trouble is grieuous payne withall.
Good counsell helpeth, making the wittes stable,
Ill councell maketh the mindes variable,
And breaketh the brayne, diminishing the strength,
And all the reason confoundeth at the length.
Great men are shamed to geue thing poore or small,
And great they denye, thus geue they nought at all,
Beside this (Codrus) princes and men royall
In our inditinges haue pleasure faint and small.
So much power haue they with men of might,
As simple doues when Egles take their flight:
Or as great windes careth for leaues drye.
They liue in pleasure and wealth continually,
In lust their liking is, and in ydlenes,
Fewe haue their mindes cleane from all viciousnes:
Pleasure is thing whereto they moste intende,
That they moste cherishe, they would haue men concend
If Poetes should their maners magnify,
They were supporters of blame and lechery:
Then should their writing be nothing commendable,
Conteyning iestes and deedes detestable
Of stinking Uenus or loue inordinate,
Of ribaude wordes which fall not for a state,
Of right oppressed, and beastly gluttony,
Of vice aduaunced, of slouth and iniury,
And other deedes infame and worthy blame,
Which were ouerlonge here to recount or name.
These to commende (Codrus) do not agree
To any Poete which loueth chastitie.

Codrus

What yes Minalcas, some haue bene stronge and bolde,
Which haue in battayle done actes manyfolde,
With mighty courage hauing them in fight,
And boldly biding for to maynteyne the right.
To thee could I nowe rehearse well nere a score
Of lust nor riches setting no force ne store.
Despising oft golde, sweete fare and beddes soft,
Which in colde harnes lye on the grounde full oft,
Closed in yron, which when their woundes blede,
Want bread and drinke them to restore and feede.
While some haue pleasure in softe golde orient,
With colde harde yron their minde is well content.
Such were the sonnes of noble lorde Hawarde,
Whose famous actes may shame a faint cowarde.
What could they more but their swete liues spende,
Their princes quarell and right for to defende:
Alas that battayle should be of that rigour,
When fame and honour riseth and is in floure,
With sodayne furour then all to quenche agayne,
But boldest heartes be nerest death certayne.

Minalcas.

For certayne (Codrus) I can not that denye,
But some in battayle behaue them manfully,
Such as in battayle do actes marciall,
Laude worthy Poetes and stile heroicall:
The pleasaunt Muses which soundeth grauitie
Had helpe and fauour while these were in degree.
But sith stronge knightes hath left their exercise,
And manly vertue corrupted is with vice,
The famous Poetes which ornately indite
Haue founde no matter whereof to singe or write.
The wit thus dyeth of poetes auncient,
So doth their writing and ditie eloquent.
For lacke of custome, thought, care and penury,
These be confounders of pleasaunt poesy.
But if some prince, some king or conquerour
Hath won in armes or battayle great honour:
Full litle they force for to delate their fame,
That other realmes may laude or prayse their name.
Of time for to come they force nothing at all,
By fame and houour to liue as immortall:
It them suffiseth, they count ynough truely
That their owne realmes their names magnify.
And that for their life they may haue laude and fame,
After their death then seeke they for no name.
And some be vntaught and learned no science,
Or els they disdayne hye stile of eloquence:
Then standeth the Poet and his poeme arere,
When princes disdayne them for to reade or here.
Or els some other is drowned all in golde,
By couetise kept in cares manyfolde.
By flagrant ardour inflamed in suche cale,
As in time past the olde king Midas was.
Then of poemes full small pleasure hath he,
Couetise and clergy full lewdly do agree.
Beside this (Codrus) with princes commonly
Be vntaught courtiers fulfilled with enuy.
Jugglers and Pipers, bourders and flatterers,
Baudes and Janglers, and cursed aduoutrers:
And mo such other of liuing vicious,
To whom is vertue aduerse and odious.
These be good Poetes forth of all courtes chase,
By thoulande maners of threatning and manace,
Sometime by fraudes, sometime by ill reporte,
And them afflicteth all other of their sort:
Like as when curres light on a carion,
Or stinking rauens fed with corruption:
These two all other away do beate and chace,
Because they alone would occupy the place.
For vnto curres is carion moste meete,
And also rauens fele stinking thinges sweete.
Another thing yet is greatly more damnable,
Of ralcolde poetes yet is a shamfull rable,
Which boyde of wisedome presumeth to indite,
Though they haue scantly the cunning of a smite:
And to what vices that princes moste intende,
Those dare these fooles solemnize and commende.
Then is he decked as Poete laureate,
When stinking Thais made him her graduate.

When

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When Muſes reſted, ſhe did her ſeaſon note,
And ſhe with Bacchus her camous did promote:
Such raſcolde dames promoted by Thais,
Bacchus, Licoris, or yet by Teſtalis,
Or by ſuche other newe forged Muſes nine
Thinke in their mindes for to haue wit diuine.
They laude their verſes, they boaſt, they vaunt and iet,
Though all their cunning be ſcantly worth a pet.
If they haue ſmelled the artes triniall,
They count them Poetes hye and heroicall.
Such is their folye, ſo fooliſhly they dote,
Thinking that none can their playne errour note:
Yet be they foolithe, auoyde of honeſtie,
Nothing ſeaſoned with ſpice of grauitie,
Auoyde of pleaſure, auoyde of eloquence,
With many wordes, and fruitleſſe of ſentence.
Unapt to learne, diſdayning to be taught,
Their priuate pleaſure in ſnare hath them ſo caught:
And worſt yet of all, they count them excellent,
Though they be fruitleſſe, rathe and improuident.
To ſuch Ambages who doth their minde incline,
They count all other as priuate of doctrine,
And that the faultes which be in them alone,
Alſo be common in other men eche one.
Thus bide good Poetes oft time rebuke and blame,
Becauſe of other which haue deſpiſed name.
And thus for the bad the good be cleane abiect,
Their art and poeme counted of none effect.
Who wanteth reaſon good to diſcerne from ill
Doth worthy writers interprete at his will:
So both the laudes of good and not laudable
For lacke of knowledge become vituperable.

Codrus

In faythe Minalcas, I well allowe thy wit,
Yet would I gladly heare nowe ſome mery fit
Of mayde Marion, or els of Robin hood,
Or Bentleyes ale which chaſeth well the bloud:
Of perte of Norwiche, or ſauce of Wilberton,
Or buckiſhe Joly well ſtuffed as a ton:
Talke of the bottell, let go the booke for nowe,
Combrous is cunning I make to God a vowe.
Speake of ſome matter which may refreſh my brayne,
Truſt me Minalcas, I ſhall rewarde thy payne.
Els talke of ſtourenes, where is more brayne then wit,
Place moſte abuſed that we haue ſpoke of yet.

Minalcas

Of all theſe thinges language to multiply,
Except I lyed, ſhould be but vilany.
It is not ſeeming a Poete one to blame,
All if his hauour hath won diffamed name.
And though ſuch beaſtes purſue me with enuy,
Malgre for malice, that payment I deſye.
My maſter teacheth, ſo doth reaſon and ſkill,
That man ſhould reſtore, and render good for ill.

Codrus

Then talke of ſomewhat, lo it is longe to night,
Yet hath the ſonne more then an houre of light,

Minalcas

If I ought common ſounding to grauitie,
I feare to obtayne but ſmall rewarde of thee:
But if I common of vice or wantonnes,
Then of our Lorde ſhall my rewarde be leſſe,
Wherfore my ballade ſhall haue concluſion
On fruitfull clauſes of noble Salomon.

Codrus

Sing on Minalcas, he may do litle thing,
Which to a ballade diſdayneth the hearing:
But if thy ditie accorde not to my minde,
Then my rewarde and promiſe is behinde,
By mans maners it lightly doth appere,
What men deſire, that loue they for to here.

Minalcas

Though in thy promiſe I finde no certentie,
Yet of my cunning ſhalt thou haue part of me,
I call no muſes to geue to me doctrine,
But ayde and confort of ſtrength and might diuine,
To clere my reaſon with wiſedome and prudence
To ſing one ballade extract of ſapience.

As medoes paynted with floures redolent
The ſight reioyce of ſuche as them beholde:
So man indued with vertue excellent
Fragrantly ſhineth with beames manyfolde.
Uertue with wiſedome exceedeth ſtore of gold,
If riches abound, ſet not on them thy truſt.
When ſtrength is ſturdy, then man is pert and bolde,
But wit and wiſedome ſoone lay him in the duſt.

That man is beaſtly which ſueth carnall luſt,
Spende not on women thy riches or ſubſtaunce,
For lacke of ying as ſtele or yron ruſt,
So ruſteth reaſon by wilfull ignoraunce.
In fraudfull beautie ſet but ſmall pleaſaunce,
A pleaſaunt apple is oft corrupt within,
Grounde thee in youth on goodly gouernaunce,
It is good token when man doth well begin.

Joy not in malice, that is a mortall ſinne,
Man is perceyued by language and doctrine,
Better is to loſe then wrongfully to winne,
He loueth wiſedome which loueth diſcipline:
Rathe enterpriſes oft bringeth to ruine,
A man may contende, God geueth victory,
Set neuer thy minde on thing which is not thine,
Truſt not in honour, all wealth is tranſitory,

Combine thou thy tonge with reaſon and memory,
Speake not to haſty without aduiſement,
So liue in this life that thou mayſt truſt on glory,
Which is not caduke, but laſting permanent.
There is no ſecrete with people vinolent,
By beaſtly lurkeit the like is breuiate,
Though ſome haue pleaſure in ſumptuous garment,
Yet goodly maners him maketh more ornate.

Codrus.

Ho there Minalcas, of this haue we ynough,
What ſhould a Ploughman go farther then his plough,
What ſhould a ſhepherde in wiſedome wade ſo farre,
Talke he of tankarde, or of his bore of tarre.
Tell ſomewhat els, wherein is more confort,
So ſhall the reaſon and time ſeeme light and ſhort.

Minalcas

For thou of Hawarde nowe lately did recite,
I haue a ditie which Colnix did indite:
His death complayning, but it is lamentable
To heare a Captayne ſo good and honorable,
So ſoone withdrawen by deathes crueltie,
Before his vertue was at moſte hye degree.
If death for a reaſon had ſhewed him fauour,
To all his nation he ſhould haue bene honour,
Alas, bolde heartes be nereſt death in warre,
When out of daunger cowardes ſtande afarre.

Codrus

All if that ditie be neuer ſo lamentable,
Refrayne my teares I ſhall as I am able,

Begin

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Begin Minalcas, tell of the bolde hawarde,
If fortune fauour hope after some rewarde.

Minalcas

I pray thee Codrus (my whey is weake and thin)
Lende me thy bottell to drinke or I begin.

Codrus

If ought be tasted, the remnant shall pall,
I may not aforde nowe for to spende out all.
We sit in shadowe, the Sunne is not feruent,
Call for it after, then shall I be content.

Minalcas

Still thou destrest thy pleasure of my art,
But of thy bottell nought wilt thou yet depart,
Though thou be nigard, and nought wilt geue of thine,
Yet this one time thou shalt haue part of mine.
Nowe harken Codrus, I tell mine elegy,
But small is the pleasure of dolefull armony.

The descripti on of the Tovvre of *vertue and honour, into the which* the noble Hawarde contended *to enter by worthy actes of* chiualry.

Minalcas speaketh.

HIgh on a mountayne of highnes maruelous,
With pendant cliffes of stones harde as flent,
Is made a castell or toure moste curious,
Dreadfull vnto sight, but inwarde excellent.
Such as would enter finde paynes and torment,
So harde is the way vnto the same mountayne,
Streyght, hye and thorny, turning and different,
That many labour for to ascende in vayne.

Who doth perseuer, and to this towre attayne
Shall haue great pleasure to see the building olde,
Joyned and graued, surmounting mans brayne,
And all the walles within of kynell golde,
With olde historyes, and pictures manyfolde,
Glistering as bright as Phebus orient,
With marble pillers the building to vpholde,
About be turrets of shape moste excellent.

This towre is gotten by labour diligent,
In it remayne such as haue won honoure
By holy liuing, by strength or tournament,
And moste by wisedome attayne vnto this towre:
Briefely, all people of godly behauour,
By rightwise battayle, Justice and equitie,
Or that in merry hath had a chiefe pleasour:
In it haue rowmes eche after his degree,

This goodly Castell (thus shining in beautie)
Is named Castell of vertue and honour,
In it eyght Henry is in his maiestie
Moste hye enhaunsed as ought a conquerour:
In it remayneth the worthy gouernour,
A stocke and fountayne of noble progeny,
Moste noble Hawarde the duke and protectour,
Named of Northfolke the floure of chiualry.

Here is the Talbot manfull and hardy,
With other princes and men of dignitie,
Which to win honour do all their might apply,
Supporting Justice, concorde and equitie:
The manly Corson within this towre I see,
Thefe haue we seene eche one in his estate,
With many other of hye and meane degree,
For marciall actes with crownes laureate.

Of this stronge castell is porter at the gate
Strong sturdy labour, much like a champion,
But goodly vertue a lady moste ornate
Within gouerneth with great prouision:
But of this castell in the moste hyest trone
Is honour shining in rowme imperiall,
Which vnrewarded of them leaueth not one
That come by labour and vertue principall.

Fearefull is labour without fauour at all,
Dreadfull of visage, a monster intreatable,
Like Cerberus lying at gates infernall,
To some men his looke is halfe intollerable,
His shoulders large, for burthen strong and able,
His body bristled, his necke mightie and stiffe,
By sturdy sinewes his ioyntes stronge and stable,
Like marble stones his handes be as stiffe.

Here must man banquisshe the dragon of Cadmus,
Against the Chimer here stourly must he fight,
Here must he banquish the fearefull Pegasus,
For the golden fleece here must he shewe his might:
If labour gaynsay, he can nothing be right,
This monster labour oft chaungeth his figure,
Sometime an oxe, a bore, or lion wight
Playnely he seemeth, thus chaungeth his nature.

Like as Protheus oft chaunged his stature,
Mutable of figure oft times in one houre,
When Aristeus in bondes had him sure:
To diuers figures likewise chaungeth labour,
Under his browes he dreadfully doth loure,
With glistering eyen, and side dependaunt beard,
For thirst and hunger alway his chere is loure,
His horned forehead doth make faynt hearres feard.

Alway he drinketh, and yet alway is drye,
The sweat distilling with droppes aboundaunt,
His breast and forehead doth humours multiply
By sweating showres, yet is this payne pleasaunt:
Of day and night his resting time is scant,
No day ouerpasseth exempt of busynes,
His sight infourmeth the rude and ignorant,
Who dare perseuer, he geueth them riches.

None he auaunceth but after stedfastnes,
Of litle burthen his bely is, and small,
His mighty thyes his vigour doth expres,
His shankes sturdy, and large keete withall:
By wrath he rageth, and still doth chide and brall,
Such as would enter repelling with his crye,
As well estates as homely men rurall
At the first entry he threatneth greefully.

I trowe olde fathers (whom men nowe magnify)
Called this monster Minerua stoute and loure,
For strength and sinewes of man moste commonly
Are tame and febled by cures and laboure.
Great Hercules the mighty conquerour
Was by this monster ouercome and superate,
All if he before vnto his great honour
The sonne of Uenus had strongly subiugate.

Who would with honour be purely laureate,
Must with this monster longe time before contende,
But lightly is man ouercome and fatigate,
To lady vertue if he not well intende:

When

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When ſtrength is febled the helpeth at the ende,
Opening the gates and paſſage to honour,
By whoſe aſſiſtaunce ſoone may a man aſcende
The hye degrees of the triumphant Tour.

Mankinde inflamed by goodly behauour
Of lady vertue come to this towre with payne,
But for the entree pretendeth them rigour
Many one abaſheth, rebuking backe agayne:
To purchaſe honour they would be glad and fayne,
But fearefull labour, the porter is ſo fell,
To them proclaming, their enterpriſe is vayne,
Except they before with him contende and mell.

Here moſte of all muſte mans might excell
With ſtedfaſt courage and ſure perſeueraunce,
Els ſhall this monſter him backe agayne repell,
But man preuayleth by long continuaunce.
No coſtly treaſour nor Jewell of pleaſaunce
Without price or payne can man in earth come by:
So without labour doth vertue none aduaunce
To parfite honour and noble ſeignory.

Faynt cowarde mindes ſoone at the firſt eſcry
Of ſturdie labour, fall to the grounde as lame,
Els runne they backwarde faſt fleing cowardly,
As bartles wretches caring nothing for ſhame:
But noble hearties to win immortall name,
Fight at theſe gates till they ouercome labour,
Then lady vertue with good report and fame
Suche knightes gideth to laude and hye honour.

But cruell fortune to ſome is harde and ſoure,
That after trauell and many deadly wounde,
When lady vertue ſhould graunt to them this toure
Then frowarde fortune them beateth to the ground:
Of this examples ouer many do abounde,
But chiefly this one, the noble lorde Hawarde,
When he chiefe honour was worthy to haue founde,
Falſe death and fortune bereft him his rewarde.

Longe he contended in battayle ſtrong and harde,
With payne and labour, with might repelling wrong,
No backe he turned as doth ſome faint cowarde,
But with this monſter boldly contended long,
When he had broken the locke and doores ſtronge,
Ouercome the porter, and ſhould aſcende the toure,
To liue in honour hye conquerours amonge,
Then cruell fortune and death did him deuoure.

Though he were borne to glory and honour,
Of auncient ſtocke and noble progenie,
Yet thought his courage to be of more valour,
By his owne actes and noble chiualry.
Like as becommeth a knight to fortifye
His princes quarell with right and equitie,
So did this hawarde with courage ballauntly,
Till death abated his bolde audacitie.

O happy Samſon more fortunate then he
Onely in ſtrength, but not in hye courage,
O cruell fortune why durſt thy crueltie
This floure of knighthood to ſlea in luſty age,
Thou haſt debated the floure of his linage,
If thou had mercy bewayle his death thou might,
For cruell lions and mo beaſtes ſauage
Long time not ceaſed for to bewayle this knight,

O death thou haſte done agaynſt both lawe and right,
To ſpare a cowarde without daunger or wounde,
And thus ſoone to quench of chiualry the light,
O death enuious moſte enemie to our grounde,
What moſte auayleth thou ſooneſt doeth confounde?
Why did not vertue aſſiſt hir champion?
Thou might haue ayded, for ſoothly thou was bounde,
For during his life he loued thee alone,

O God almighty in thy eternall trone,
To whom all vertue is deare and acceptable,
If reaſon ſuffred to thee our crye and mone,
This dede might impute and fortune lamentable,
Thou might haue left vs this knight moſte honorable,
Our wealth and honour to haue kept in degree:
Alas why hath death ſo falſe and diſceyuable,
Mankinde to torment this will and libertie?

It quencheth vertue, ſparing iniquitie,
The beſt it ſtriketh, of bad hauing diſdayne,
No helpe nor comfort hath our aduerſitie,
Death dayly ſtriketh though dayly we complayne:
To treate a tiran it is but thing in vayne,
Mekenes prouoketh his wrath and tirannye,
So at our prayer death hath the more diſdayne,
We do by mekenes his furour multiply.

If ſome fell tiran replete with villany
Should thus haue ended the dede were commendable;
But a ſtoute captayne diſpoſed to mercy
So ſoone thus faded, the caſe is lamentable,
Was he not humble, iocunde and companable,
No man deſpiſing, and firſt in all labour,
Right wiſe with mercy debonair and tretable,
Mate and companion with euery ſoldier.

Vice he ſubdued by goodly behauour,
Like as a rider doth a wilde ſtede ſubdue,
His body ſubiect, his ſoule was gouernour,
From vice withdrawen to goodnes and vertue,
When pride rebelled mekenes did it eſchue,
Free minde and almes ſubdued auarice:
Alway he noted this ſaying iuſte and true,
That noble mindes deſpiſed couetiſe.

His death declareth that ſlouth he did deſpiſe,
By hardie courage as fyrſt in ieopardie,
Alway he vſed ſome noble exerciſe,
Suche as belongeth to worthy chiualrie,
In him was there founde no ſparkle of enuy,
Alway he lauded and prayſed worthynes,
Suche as were doughtie rewarding largely,
Wrath ſaue in reaſon he wiſely coulde repres.

Of wine or Bacchus deſpiſed he exceſſe,
For mindes kindled to actes martiall,
Seking for honour and name of doughtineſſe,
Deſpiſeth ſurfet and liuing beſtiall,
In him no power hath luſte venereall,
For buſy labour and pleaſaunt abſtinence
All corporall luſt ſoone cauſeth for to fall,
No luſt ſubdueth where reigneth diligence.

He was a piller of ſober countenaunce,
His onely treaſour and iewell was good name,
But O curſed death thy wrathfull violence,
By ſtroke vnwarned halfe blinded of his fame,
Whom may I accuſe, whom may I put in blame,
God for death, or fortune, or impotent nature,
God doth his pleaſour, and death will haue the ſame,
Nature was mighty longe able to endure,

In fortune is the fault nowe am I ſure,
I would if I durſt his tiranny accuſe:
O curſed fortune if thou be creature,
Who gaue thee power thus people to abuſe.

Thy mutable might me cauſeth oft to muſe,
When man is plunged in dolour and diſtreſſe,
Thy face thou chaungeſt, which did earſt refuſe,
By ſodayne chaunces him lifting to richeſſe.

And ſuche as longe time haue liued in noblenes
Anone thou plungeſt in payne and pouertie,
Wealth, honour, ſtrength, right, iuſtice and goodnes,
Wilery, dolour, lowe rowme, iniquitie,
Theſe thou rewardeſt like as it pleaſeth thee,
To mans merite without reſpect at all,
One this day being in great auctho*r*itie,
Agayne to mo*r*owe thou cauſeſt fo*r* to fall.

When man is wo*r*thy a rowme imperiall,
On him thou glowmeſt with frowarde countenaunce,
Weake is thy p*r*omis reuoluing as a ball,
Thou haſt no fauour to godly gouernaunce,
No man by merite thou vſeſt to aduaunce,
O blinded fo*r*tune ofte time info*r*tunate,
When man thee truſteth then falleth ſome miſchaunce,
Unwarely chaunging his fo*r*tune and eſtate.

Tell me fraple fo*r*tune, why did thou b*r*euiate
The liuing leaſon of ſuche a captayne,
That when his actes ought to be laureate
Thy fauour turned him ſuffring to be ſlayne?
I blame thee fo*r*tune, and thee excuſe agayne,
Fo*r* though thy fauour to him was rigo*r*ous,
Suche is thy cuſtome fo*r* to be vncertayne,
And namely when man is hye and glo*r*ious.

But moſte wo*r*thy duke hye and victo*r*ious,
Reſpire to comfo*r*t, ſee the vncertentie
Of other p*r*inces, whoſe fo*r*tune p*r*oſperous
Ofretime haue ended in harde aduerſitie:
Read of Pompeius whoſe pereles dignitie
Againſt great Ceſar did wealth of Rome defende,
Whom after fo*r*tune b*r*ought in captiuitie,
And he in Egipt was headed at the ende.

In likewiſe Ceſar which did with him contende,
When all the wo*r*lde to him was ſubiugate,
From his hye honour did ſodenly deſcende,
Murd*r*ed in Rome by chaunce info*r*tunate.
Cato and Seneke, with Tully laureate,
Theſe and mo like fo*r* all their ſapience
Hath p*r*oued fo*r*tune, fo*r* blinding their eſtate,
By wo*r*ongfull ſlaunders and deadly violence.

To poo*r* and riche it hath no difference,
Olde Policrates ſuppoſing peril paſt,
With death diſhoneſt ended his excellence,
Great Alexander by fo*r*tune was downe caſt,
One d*r*aught of poyſon him filled at the laſt,
Whom all the wo*r*lde earſt could not ſaciate:
What is all honour and power but a blaſt,
When fo*r*tune th*r*eatneth the life to b*r*euiate.

Beholde on Pirrus the king info*r*tunate
With a ſmall ſtone dead p*r*oſtrate vpon the grounde,
See Ualerian b*r*ought downe from his eſtate,
From his empire in Percy th*r*all and bounde.

Of olde Priamus it is in w*r*iting founde,
Howe he by Pyr*r*us was in his palace ſlayne,
Paris and Hecto*r* receyued mo*r*tall wounde,
To truſt in fo*r*tune it is a thing in vayne.

The mighty Cyrus a king of Realmes twayne
Was ſlayne and his hoſte of Thomiris the quene.
Thus is no matter of fo*r*tune to complayne,
All that newe falleth of olde time hath bene ſene,
This ſhall be, this is, and this hath euer bene,
That boldeſt heartes be neareſt ieopardie,
To dye in battayle is honour as men wene
To ſuche as haue ioy in haunting chiualry.

Suche famous ending the name doth magnifie,
Note wo*r*thy duke, no cauſe is to complayne,
His like not ended foule no*r* diſhoneſtly,
In bed no*r* tauerne his luſtes to mayntеyne,
But like as beſemed a noble captayne,
In ſturdie harnes he died fo*r* the right,
From deathes daunger no man may flee certayne,
But ſuche death is meteſt vnto ſo noble a knight.

But death it to call me thinke it vnright,
Sith his wo*r*thy name ſhall laſte perpetuall,
To all his nation example and clere light,
But to his p*r*ogeny moſte ſpecially of all,
His ſoule is in pleaſour of glo*r*y eternall,
So duke moſt doughty ioy may that noble tree,
Whoſe b*r*aunches honour ſhall neuer fade ne fall,
While beaſt is on earth o*r* fiſhes in the ſea.

Lo Cod*r*us I here haue tolde thee by and by
Of thepheard Corn*r*ix the wofull elegy,
Wherin he mourned the greeuous payne and harde,
And laſte departing of the noble lo*r*de Hawarde,
Wo*r*e he indited of this good Admirall,
But truely Cod*r*us I can not tell thee all.

Codrus

Minalcas I ſweare by holy Peters cope,
If all thing fo*r*tune as I haue truſt and hope,
If happy winde blowe I ſhall o*r* it be longe
Comfo*r*t thy ſo*r*owe and well rewarde thy longe,
What tary man a while till better fo*r*tune come,
If my part be any then ſhall thy part be ſome.

Minalcas

If thou in purpoſe ſo to rewarde my hire,
God graunt thee Cod*r*us thy wiſhing and deſire.

Codrus

Fo*r*ſooth Minalcas I wiſhe thee ſo in dede,
And that ſhalt thou knowe if fo*r*tune with me ſpede,
Farewell Minalcas, fo*r* this time, dieu te garde,
Neare is winter the wo*r*lde is to harde.

Minalcas

Go wretched nigarde, God ſende thee care and payne,
Our Lo*r*de let thee neuer come hither mo*r*e agayne,
And as did Midas, God turne it all to golde
That euer thou toucheſt o*r* ſhalt in handes holde,
Fo*r* ſo muche on golde is fixed thy liking,
That thou deſpiſeſt both vertue and cunning.

Thus endeth the fourth Egloge.

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The fyfth Egloge of Alexander Barclay,

entituled Amintas and Fauſtus, of the diſputation of Citizens and men of the Countrey.

¶ The Argument.

IN colde January when fire is comfortable,
And that the fieldes be nere intollerable,
When ſhepe and paſtours leaueth fielde & folde,
And drawe to cotes for to eſchue the colde,
What time the verdure of ground and euery tree,
By froſt and ſtormes is priuate of beautee,
And euery ſmall birde thinketh the winter longe,
Which well appeareth by ceaſing of their ſonge.
At this ſame ſeaſon two herdes freſhe of age
At time appoynted met both in one cotage,
The firſt highte Fauſtus, the ſeconde Amintas,
Harde was to knowe which better huſbande was,
For eche of them both ſet more by his pleaſour
Then by aboundaunce of riches or treaſour.
Amintas was formall and proper in his geare,
A man on his cloke ſhould not eſpye a heare,
Nor of his clothing one wrinkle ſtande a wry,
In London he learned to go ſo manerly,
High on his bonet ſtacke a fayre brouche of tinne,
His purſes lining was ſimple, poore and thinne:
But a lordes ſtomake and a beggers pouche
Full ill accordeth, ſuche was the comely clouch,
In the towne and citie ſo longe ietted had he
That from thence he fled for det and pouertie,
No wafrer, tauerne, alehouſe or tauerner,
To him was there hid while he was hoſteler,
Firſt was he hoſteler, and then a wafrer,
Then a coſtermonger, and laſt a tauerner,
About all London there was no proper prim
But long time had bene familier with him,
But when coyne fayled no fauour more had he,
Wherfore he was glad out of the towne to flee.
But ſhepheard Fauſtus was yet more fortunate,
For alway was he content with his eſtate,
Yet nothing he had to comfort him in age,
Saue a milch cowe and a poore cotage,
The towne he vſed, and great pleaſour he had
To ſee the citie oft time while he was lad.
For milke and butter he thither brought to ſell,
But neuer thought he in citie for to dwell,
For well he noted the mad enormitie,
Enuy, fraude, malice and ſuche iniquitie
Which reigne in cities, therefore he led his life
Uplande in village without debate and ſtrife.
When theſe two herdes were thus together met,
Hauing no charges nor labour them to let,
Their ſhepe were all ſure and cloſed in a cote,
Them ſelues lay in litter pleaſauntly and hote.
For coſtly was fire in hardeſt of the yere,
When men haue moſte nede then euery thing is dere,
For paſſing of time and recreation,
They both delited in communication,
Namely they pleaded of the diuerſitie
Of rurall huſbandes and men of the citie.
Fauſtus accuſed and blamed citizens,
To them imputing great faultes, crime and ſine:
Amintas blamed the rurall men agayne,
And eche of them both his quarell did maynteyne,
All wrath deſpiſed, all malice and ill will
Cleane layde apart, eche did rehearſe his ſkill,
But firſt Amintas thus to ſpeake began,
As he which counted him ſelfe the better man.

FINIS.

Amintas firſt ſpeaketh.

THe winter ſnowes, all couered is the grounde,
The northy wind blowes ſharpe & with kerefull ſound
The longe icle ficles at the ewes hang,
The ſtreame is froſen, the night is cold & long,
Where botes rowed nowe cartes haue paſſage,
From yoke the oxen be loſed and bondage,
The ploweman reſteth auoyde of buſineſſe,
Saue when he tendeth his harnes for to dreſſe,
Mably his wife ſitteth before the fyre
All blacke and ſmoky clothed in rude attire,
Sething ſome grewell, and ſtirring the pulment
Of peaſe or frument, a noble meat for lent,
The ſummer ſeaſon men counted nowe laudable
Whoſe ſeruour before they thought intollerable,
The froſty winter and wether temperate
Which men then prayſed they nowe diſpraiſe and hate,
Colde they deſired, but nowe it is prefent
They braule and grutche their mindes not content.
Thus mutable men them pleaſed can not holde,
At great heat grutching, and grutching when it is cold.

Fauſtus

All pleaſour preſent of men is counted ſmall,
Deſire obtayned ſome counteth nought at all,
What men hope after that ſemeth great and deare,
At light by diſtaunce appeareth great and cleare.

Amintas

Eche time and ſeaſon hath his delite and ioyes,
Loke in the ſtretes beholde the little boyes,
Howe in fruite ſeaſon for ioy they ſing and hop,
In lent is eche one full buſy with his top,
And nowe in winter for all the greeuous colde
All rent and ragged a man may them beholde,
They haue great pleaſour ſuppoſing well to dine,
When men be buſied in killing of fat ſwine,

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They get the bladder and blowe it great and thin,
With many beanes or pealon put within,
It ratleth, loundeth, and thineth clere and fayre,
While it is throwen and caste vp in the ayre,
Eche one contendeth and hath a great delite
With foote and with hande the bladder for to smite,
If it fall to grounde they lifte it vp agayne,
This wise to labour they count it for no payne,
Renning and leaping they driue away the colde.
The sturdie plowman luskie, strong and bolde
Ouercommeth the winter with driuing the foote ball,
Forgetting labour and many a greuous fall.

Faustus

When labour lofer in fruiteles vanitie
Then in fayre workes of great vtilitie,
In suche trifles we labour for domage,
Worke we despise which bringeth aduauntage.

Amintas

Touching their labour it can not me displeale,
While we be in rest and better here at eale
In the warme litter, small payne hath little hire,
Here may we walow while milke is on the fire,
If it be crudded of bread we nede no crome,
If thou bide Faustus thereof thou shalt haue some.

Faustus

Winter declareth harde nede and pouertie,
Then men it feleth which haue necessitie,
Truely Amintas I tell thee mine intent,
We fonde yong people be muche improuident,
We stray in summer without thought, care or hede,
Of suche thinges as we in winter shall haue nede,
As soone as we heare a bagpipe or a drone,
Then leaue we labour there is our money gone,
But when the northy winde with stormes violent
Hath brought colde winter poore wretches to torment,
And voyde of leaues is euery bough and tree,
That one may clerely the empty nestes see,
Then is all our woll and lambes gone and solde,
We tremble naked and dye almost for colde,
Our shoulders all bare, our hose and showes rent,
By rechlesse youth thus all is gone and spent.
This commeth for want of good prouision,
Youth dayneth counsell, scorning discretion,
When pouertie thus hath caught vs in hir snare
Then doth the winter our mad folly declare.
Nowe truely Amintas I tell to thee my mate,
That towne dwellers liue greatly more fortunate,
And somewhat wiser be they also then we,
They gather treasour and riches in plentie,
They spoyle the lambes and fores of their skin
To lap their wombes and fat sides therin,
In lust, in pleasour, and good in aboundaunce
Palle they their liues, we haue not sufficiaunce.

Amintas

The men of the earth be fooles eche one,
We poore shepheardes be not to blame alone,
More folly vereth the men of the citie,
I graunt vs ouersene, they madder be then we,
Though I long season did in the citie dwell
I fauour it not, troth dare I boldly tell,
Though citizens be of liuing reprouable,
Yet fortune to them is muche more fauourable,
Fortune to them is like a mother dere,
As a stepmother she doth to vs appeare,
Them she exalteth to honour and richesse,
Vs she oppresseth in care and wretchednesse,
What is vayne fortune but thing vituperable,
In unhappy madnesse, vnworthy and vnstable.

Faustus

No doubt Amintas let me be fortunate,
And then shall I soone become a great estate,
My coyne shall encrease, then thortly shall I be
Called to office to gouerne a citie,
All men shall heare me and geue to me credence,
The commontie bare head shall do me reuerence,
All other rulers, lowe men and commontie
Shall gladly desire to haue aduise of me.
If I be happy and fortune on me smile,
Thus shall I ascende and mounte within a while,
Alke thou of Cornix, declare to thee he can,
Howe coyne more then cunning exalteth euery man.

Amintas

O Faustus Faustus, thou erres from the way,
This is not fortune, full little do she may,
Though I my selfe rehearsed but lately,
That fortune hath might a man to magnifie,
I kept the opinion of witlesse commontie,
And grounded my selfe on none authoritie.
It is not fortune which graunteth excellence,
True honour is wonne by vertue and sapience,
If men get honour by worldly pollicy
It is no honour but wretched milery,
God maketh mightie, God geueth true honour
To godly persons of godly behauour.
God first dispoled and made diuersitie
Betwene rude plowmen and men of the citie,
And in what maner Cornix thine owne mate
As we went talking recounted to me late.

Faustus

What tolde thee Cornix, tell me I thee pray,
He had good reason suche thinges to conuay,
His wit was pregnaunt, no reason did he want,
But truth to declare his money was but scant.
But what then? some man haue plentie of cunning
Which hath of riches small plentie or nothing.

Amintas

In hearing my tale if thou haue thy delite,
Then take some labour, for nowe is good respite,
Faustus arise thou out of this litter hote,
Go see and visite our wethers in the cote,
Arise, go and come, thou art both yong and able,
After great colde heate is more comfortable,
Go man for shame, he is a slouthfull dawe
Which leaueth profite for pleasour of hote strawe.

Faustus

Thinke not Amintas that Faustus hath disdayne,
To do thy pleasour I shall refuse no payne,
Loke here Amintas, Lorde benedicite,
The colde snowe reacheth muche higher then my knee,
Scant may the houses suche burthen well susteyne,
Lelle hurte is tempest and sodayne storme of rayne,
On toppe of the chimney there is a heape of snowe
So hye extending out steple is more lowe,
The snowe is so white and the sunne so bright,
That playnly Amintas amased is my sight.

Amintas

Geue to the beastes good rowen in plentie,
And stoppe all the holes where thou canst fautes see,

Stop

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Stop them with ſtubble, eſt daube them with ſome clay
And when thou haſt done then come agayne thy way,
Nought is more noyſome to flocke, cotage nor folde,
Then ſoden tempeſt and vnprouided colde.
What nowe already frende Fauſtus here agayne,
By ſhort concluſion bad worke apeareth playne,
Thy comming agayne me thinke is all to ſoone
Ought to haue ended or prouide to haue done.

Fauſtus

This comberous wether made me more diligent,
I ran all the way both as I came and went,
And there I ſped me and toke the greater payne,
Becauſe I lightly would be with thee agayne,
After great colde it is full ſwete God wot
To tumble in the ſtrawe or in the litter hot.
Nowe be we Fauſtus in hay vp to the chin,
Fulfill thy promiſe, I pray thee nowe begin,
Tell the beginning of thy diuerſitie
Betwene rurall men and men of the citie,
I knowe the reaſon and talking of Coſmix,
But ſince I him ſawe be paſſed yeres ſixe,
His iocunde ieſtes made me ofte time full glad,
Our firſt acquayntaunce was when I was a lad:
Nowe ſpeake my Amintas, and I ſhall holde me ſtill
Till thou haue ended and ſpoken all thy will.

Amintas

This great difference and firſt diuerſitie
Betwene rurall men and them of the citie,
Began in this wiſe as Coſmix to me tolde,
Whiche well coulde common of many matters olde.
Firſt when the worlde was founded and create,
And Adam and Eue were ſet in their eſtate,
Our Lorde conioyned them both as man and wife,
To liue in concorde the ſeaſon of their life,
And them commaunded mankinde to multiply,
By generation to get them progeny,
They both obeyed this ſwete commaundement
With faythfull heartes and labour diligent,
But would to Jeſu they had bene wiſe and ware
From that fatall fruit which kindled all their care.
But to my purpoſe: firſt Eue had children two,
A ſonne and a daughter, our Lorde diſpoſed ſo,
And ſo yere by yere two twins ſhe brought,
When man aſſiſteth God worketh not for nought,
By ſuche maner theſe two did them apply,
The worlde to fulfill, encreaſe and multiply.
At the laſte our Lord at ende of fiftene yere
To Eue our mother did on a time appeare,
And in what maner nowe heare me Fauſtus:
Adam on the fielde forth with his wethers was,
His flocke then he led without all dread and feare,
Then were no wowers him nor his wife to deare,
He was not troubled that time with ieloufie,
Then was no body to do that villany,
No horned kiddes were liuing at that time,
Long after this began this curſed crime,
Then was no cucko betwene the eaſt and weſt
To lay wrong egges within a ſtraunge neſt,
Then none ſuſpected the liuing of his wife,
Wedlocke was quiet and pleaſaunt without ſtrife.
But after when people began to multiply
Then fyrſt was kindled the flame of ielouſy,
For that man committeth ſore dredeth he againe,
Fraude feareth falſhode, ſuſpecting oft in vayne,
A theefe ſuſpecteth all men of felony,
Breakers of wedlocke be full of ielouſy,
And therfore all ſuche as with the ſworde do ſtrike
Feare to be ſerued with the ſcaberd like.
Thus while that Adam was pitching of his folde
Eue was at home and ſat on the threſholde,
With all hir babes and children hir about,
Eyther on hir lappe within or els without,
Nowe had ſhe pleaſour them colling and balling,
And eft was ſhe buſy them louſing and kembing,
And buſy with butter for to annoynt their necke,
Sometime ſhe muſed them pleaſauntly to decke.
In the meane time while ſhe was occupied,
Our Lorde drawing nere ſhe ſodenly eſpied,
Anone ſhe bluſhed, reuoluing in hir minde,
That if our Lorde there ſhould all thoſe babes find.
So ſoone engendred, ſuppoſe he nedes muſt
That it was token of to great carnall luſt,
And all aſhamed as faſt as euer ſhe might
She haſted and hid ſome of them out of ſight,
Some vnder hay, ſome vnder ſtrawe and chaffe,
Some in the chimney, ſome in a tubbe of draffe,
But ſuche as were fayre and of their ſtature right
As wiſe and ſubtill reſerued ſhe in ſight.
Anone came our Lorde vnto the woman nere,
And hir ſaluted with ſwete and ſmiling chere,
And ſaide: O woman let me thy children ſee,
I come to promote eche after his degree.
Firſt was the woman amaſed nere for dreede,
At laſte ſhe commaunded the eldeſt to procede,
And gaue them comfort to haue audacitie,
Though they were bolder and doubted leſſe then ſhe,
God on them ſmiled, and them comforted ſo
As we with whelpes and birdes vſe to do,
And then at the laſte to the moſte olde of all
He ſaide: haue thou ſcepter of rowme imperiall,
Thou art the eldeſt thou ſhalt haue moſt honour,
Juſtice requireth that thou be Emperour.
Then to the ſeconde he ſaide: it is ſeming
That thou be haunced to the honour of a king.
And vnto the thirde he gaue ſuche dignitie,
To gide an army a noble duke to be,
And ſaide: haue thou here harde yron and armour,
Be thou in battayle a head and gouernour,
And ſo forth to other as they were in degree,
Eche he promoted to worthy dignitie.
Some made he Earles, ſome lordes, ſome barons,
Some ſquires, ſome knightes, ſome hardy champions,
And then brought he forth the cepter and the crowne,
The ſworde, the pollax, the helme and haberiowne,
The ſtreamer, ſtandard, the ghetton and the mace,
The ſpeare and the ſhielde, nowe Eue had great ſolace,
He gaue them armour, and taught them pollicy
All thing to gouerne concerning chiualry.
Then made he iudges, maiors and gouernours,
Marchauntes, chiriſſes and other protectours,
Aldermen, burgeſſes, and other in degree,
After the cuſtome of court and of citie.
Thus all the children then being in preſence,
He ſet in honour and rowme of excellence,
Oft time reuoluing and turning in his minde
The caduke honours belonging to mankinde.
In the meane ſeaſon Eue very ioyfull was
That all theſe matters were brought ſo well to paſſe,
Then ſtewe ſhe in haſte for to haue pleaſour more,
And them preſented whom ſhe had hid before,
And vnrequired preſenting them ſaide ſhe,
O Lorde theſe alſo my very children be,
Theſe be the fruite alſo of my wome,
Hid for ſhamefaſtneſſe within my houſe at home,
O Lorde moſte mightie, hye father, creatour,
Withſaue to graunt them ſome office of honour,
Their heere was rugged poudred all with chaffe,
Some full of ſtrawes, ſome other full of draffe,
Some with cobwebbes and duſt were ſo arayde
That one beholding on them might be afrayde,

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Blacke was their colour and bad was their figure,
Uncomely to sight, mishapen of stature,
Our Lorde not smiled on them to shewe pleasaunce,
But saide to them thus with troubled countenaunce:
Ye smell all smoky, of stubble and of chaffe,
Ye smell of the grounde, of wedes and of draffe,
And after your sent and tedious sauour
Shall be your rowmes and all your behauour,
None can a pitcher turne to a siluer pece,
Nor make goodly silke of a gotes fleece,
And harde is also to make without fayle
A bright two hande sworde of a cowes tayle.
No more will I make, howebeit that I can,
Of a vile villayne a noble gentleman,
Ye shall be plowmen and tillers of the grounde,
To payne and labour shall ye alway be bounde,
Some shall kepe oxen, and some shall hogges kepe,
Some shall be thrashers, some other shall kepe shepe,
To digge and to delue, to hedge and to dike,
Take this for your lot and other labour like,
To drudge and to dwell in workes vile and rude,
This wise shall ye liue in endlesse seruitude,
Reaping and mowing of fodder, grasse and corne,
Yet shall towne dwellers oft laugh you vnto scorne,
Yet some shall we graunt to dwell in the citie,
For to make puddinges and butchers for to be,
Coblers or tinkers or els costarde iaggers,
Hostelers or daubers, or droupy water laggers,
And suche other sorte whose dayly businesse
Passeth in workes and labour of vilenesse,
To stoupe and to sweate, and subiect to become,
And neuer to be ridde from bondage and thraldome.
Then brought our Lorde to them the carte and harowe,
The gad & the whip, the mattoke & the wheelebarowe,
The spade, the shouell, the forke and the plough,
And all suche tooles, then bad he them be tough,
And neuer to grutche at labour nor at payne,
For if they so did it should be thing in vayne.
Thus saide the father and Lorde omnipotent,
And then he ascended vp to the firmament,
Thus began honour and thus began bondage,
And diuersitie of citie and village,
And seruile labour first in the worlde began,
Demaunde of Cornix, declare the truth he can,
This tolde me Cornix which wonned in the fen,
I trust his saying before a thousande men,

Faustus

Is this the matter praysed of thee so sore?
A strawe for fables I set by them no store,
It were a maruell if Cornix matter tolde
To laude of shepheardes, or plowmen to vpholde,
He dwelled in the towne and helde with the citie,
Till nede him moued as it hath driuen thee.
When none of you both dare to the towne resorte
Among vs shepheardes yet finde ye here comfort,
So both thou and he be greatly for to blame,
To eate out vitayle and then to hurt our name.
The ponge men of townes to mocke vs haue a gise,
Naught els can they do saue lies to deuise,
This payne inuention and foolishe fayned fable
Agaynst rurall men they haue delite to bable,
And nought they athame as blinde wretches vnwise,
Of God almightie suche leasinges to deuise,
This scorny scoffing declareth openly
Agaynst rurall men rebuke and iniury,
But thou art so rude thy paunch is so fatte,
Agaynst thine owne selfe thou busy art to chatte,
All if this same iest is thy rebuke and blame,
Thy dulled reason can not perceyue the same.
But I shall proue thee that rurall people be
More wise and noble then they of the citie,
And that the citie is full of fraude and strife,
When we in village haue good and quiet life.

Amintas

I pray thee Faustus herefore be thou not wroth,
To haue displeasour of thee I were right loth,
I thought no mauger, I tolde it for a bourde,
If I had knowen I would haue said no worde:
But lay thy pleasour, nowe tell forth thy sentence,
And I shall heare thee with sober patience.

Faustus

I shall not deny our payne and seruitude,
I knowe that plowmen for the most part be rude,
Nowe shall I tell thee high matters true and olde,
Which curteous Candidus vnto me once tolde,
Nought shall I forge nor of no leasing bable,
This is true history and no surmised fable.
At the beginning of thinges first of all,
God made shepheardes and other men rurall,
But the first plowman and tiller of the grounde
Was rude and sturdie, disdayning to be bounde,
Rough and stubborne, and Cayn men did him call,
He had of mercy and pitie none at all,
But like as the grounde is dull, stony and tough,
Stubborne and heauy, rebelling to the plough.
So the first plowman was strong and obstinate,
Froward, selfewilled, and mouer of debate:
But the first shepheard was meke and nothing fell,
Humble as a lambe, and called was Abell.
A shepe geueth milke and little hath of gall,
So this good Abell had none ill will at all.
No shepheard founde him iniurious nor wrong
Induring his like while he was them among,
And ofte of his flocke made he good sacrifice,
Of calfe or lambes, suche as were moste of price,
And of fat wethers the best not spared he,
To honour our Lorde and please his deitee.
Thus had he fauour with God omnipotent,
So pleasing our Lorde, that to this time present
From first beginning of earth and man mortall,
God hath had fauour to people pastorall,
And poore shepheardes, their cotes folde and shepe,
Angels haue come for to defende and kepe,
Some shepheardes were in lande of Allerye,
Which after haue bene promoted very hye,
So that from cotes and houses pastorall
They haue attended to dignitie royall,
Charges and labour so doth my reason blinde,
That all their names can I not vnto minde,
Yet let me studie auoyding perturbaunce,
So may I call them vnto remembraunce.
Lo nowe I haue them, Abraham, Jacob,
Loth, Isaac, yong Joseph and Job,
Thele nowe rehearsed and all the patriarkes
Haue not disdayned poore shepe nor heardes workes,
Them hath our Lorde called from humble thinges,
And made them princes, dukes, or els kinges,
So haue they chaunged their clothing pastorall,
With golden garment, purpure and gay pall,
And then haue after by magnanimitie
Brought noble realmes in their captiuitie,
And haue in battayle bene mightie conquerours,
Won fame immortall and excellent honours.
Paris was pastour the sonne of Priamus,
Pan, Silene, Orpheus, and holy Tyterus,
Saule was shepheard, so was he in like wise
Which would haue offred his sonne in sacrifice,
Moyses was shepheard and was his flocke keping,
When he came bare foote vnto the bushe flaming,

Commaun-

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Commaunded by God to leaue his flocke and go
On Gods meſſage to ſturdy Pharao.
Alſo Apollo was herde ſometime in Grece,
Nothing diſdayning to handle Ewe and fleece:
As wyte Poetes, he left diuine honour,
Glad among wethers to be a gouernour.
The bleſſed angels brought to ſuch men as we
Meſſage of concorde, of peace and vnitie,
And ſong that Gloria, flying in the ſkye,
Which our lyr Samplon doth ſing ſo meryly.
Firſt had ſhepherdes ſure tiding by meſſage
That God was made man to bye humane linage,
And herdes inſtruct by voyce angelicall
Sawe God incarnate and borne firſt of all.
And this was pleaſure of Gods Maieſtie
That ſimple herdes him firſt of all ſhould ſee,
And in their maner make vnto him offringes
Before eſtates, as riche and mightie kinges.
The ioly Harper, which after was a kinge,
And Dewe the giant ſo ſtourly with his ſling
Was firſt a ſhepherde or he had dignitie,
Right ſo were many, as ſtoute and bolde as he:
And our Lorde Jeſu, our God and Sauiour
Named him ſelfe a ſhepherde or paſtour.
Right ſo he named men meeke and patient
His flocke and his ſhepe for maners innocent:
Thinke not theſe wordes gloſed not in vayne,
They are the Goſpell, ſo ſaith lyr Peter playne.
I ſawe them my ſelfe well paynted on the wall,
Late gaſing vpon our Churche Cathedrall:
I ſawe great wethers in picture and ſmall lambes,
Waunſing, ſome ſleeping, ſome ſucking of their dams,
And ſome on the grounde me ſemed lying ſtill,
Then ſawe I horſemen at pendant of an hill,
And the three kinges with all their company,
Their crownes gliſtering bright and oriently,
With their preſentes and giftes miſticall,
All this beheldе I in picture on the wall.
But the poore paſtours as people innocent
Firſt ſawe the Crib of our Lorde omnipotent.
Thus it appeareth God loueth poore paſtours,
Sith he them graunted to haue ſo great honours.
Our Lorde hath fauour both to ſhepe and folde,
As it appereth by theſe hiſtories olde.
Our Lorde is ready to ſuccour the village,
Deſpiſing townes for malice and outrage.
For God is content with ſimple pouertie,
Pride he deſpiſeth and wrongfull dignitie.

Amintas

In good fayth Fauſtus, thy tale is veritable,
Grounded on learning, and greatly commendable:
Lately my ſelfe to ſee that picture was,
I ſawe the maunger, I ſawe the oxe and aſſe.
I well remember the people in my minde,
Me thinke yet I ſee the blacke faces of Inde:
Me thinke yet I ſee the herdes and the kinges,
And in what maner were ordred their offeringes.
As long as I liue the better ſhall I loue
The name of herdes, and citezins reproue.
Wherfore mate Fauſtus, I pray God geue thee care,
If thou the faultes of any citie ſpare.
Speake on and ſpare not, and touche their errour,
Yet may we common more then a large houre.

Fauſtus

Then turne we to talke a while of citizens,
To touche their foly and parcell of their ſinnes,
Thinke not Amintas that they of the citie
Liue better life or wiſelyer then we.
All if their clothing be doubled for the colde,
And though they gliſter ſo gayly in bright golde,
Shining in ſilkes, in purpure or veluet,
In furred robes, or clokes of ſcarlet,
And we poore herdes in ruſſet cloke and hood:
It is not clothing can make a man be good.
Better is in ragges pure liuing innocent
Then a ſoule defiled in ſumptuous garment.
Truſt me Amintas, my ſelfe with theſe ſame eyne
Haue in the citie ſuth often times ſeene
Jet in their ſilkes, and brag in the market,
As they were lordes I oft haue ſeene them ſet,
Which are ſtarke beggers, and liue in neede at home,
And oft go to bed for neede with empty wombe.
Nought is more foolish then ſuch wretches be,
Thus with proude port to cloke their pouertie.
What is neede cloked or fayned aboundaunce,
Pouertie, ſlouth, and wretched gouernaunce?
What is fayre ſemblaunce with thought and heauynes:
Forſooth nought els but cloked fooliſhnes.
And ſome haue I ſeene (which is a thing damnable)
That while they would haue a liuing delectable,
Reſt at their pleaſure, and fare deliciouſly,
Haue ſuffered their wiues defiled wetingly,
Haue ſolde their daughters flowre of virginitie,
O dede vnworthy, O blinde iniquitie:
Fame, honour, the ſoule, and chaſtitie be ſolde
For wretched liuing, O curſed thirſt of golde.
O damnable deede, ſo many for to ſpill,
One wretched carkaſſe and belly for to fill?
What thing is viler? what more abhominable?
What thing more foolish, more falſe and deteſtable?

Amintas

What if they can not to other craft them geue?
Nor finde other way or meanes for to liue?
Nede hath no lawe, of two euils perdie
To chooſe the leaſt ill is none iniquitie.

Fauſtus

Sith they haue as many ſoules as haue we,
As much of reaſon, and handes like plentie,
Why may they not to honeſt worke them geue,
And finde other way and maner for to liue.
No lawe permitteth nor willeth man perdie
To commit murther for harde neceſſitie,
No more ſhould any his ſoule defile or kill
For luſt tranſitory, or pleaſure to fulfill.
Yet be in cities mo ſuing fooliſhnes,
Wening by craft for to haue great riches:
By which craftes no man hath riches founde,
Sith time that out Lord firſt fourmed man & ground:
As Alkemiſtes wening by pollicy
Nature to alter, and coyne to multiply.
Some waſh rude metall with licours manifolde
Of herbes, wening to turne it into golde.
All pale and ſmoky be ſuch continuall,
And after labour they loſe their life and all:
Another ſorte is to this not much vnlike,
Which ſpende their times in wretched art magike,
Thereby ſuppoſing ſome treaſure to haue founde,
Which many yeres is hid within the grounde.
What is more foolish, more full of vanitie,
Or more repugning to fayth and prohibitie,
Becauſe they would flye good buſynes and payne,
They vſe ſuch trifles and wretched thinges vayne.
They proue all thinges becauſe they would do nought,
Still ſeeking newes, ſtill troubled in their thought:
Becauſe they woulde flee the labour of the lande,
All ydle trifles ſuch taketh on their hande:

Still

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Still be they busy, and neuer come to ende,
To thing profitable do kewe of them intende.
Some liue by capine, gile, kraude and pollicy,
Penury, oppression, and some on vsury.
Some gladly borowe, and neuer pay agayne,
Some keepe from seruauntes the stipend of their payne:
Some rest men giltlesse, and cast them in prison,
Some bye stronge thieues out of the dungeon.
Some kaune, some flatter, man trust not whē they smile,
Then krame they kraudes men slyly to begile.
Some in one houre more promise to thee will,
Then all his dayes he thinketh to fulfill:
By thousande meanes of kraude and craftynes
Lye they in wayte for honour and riches.
They keede the riche, and often let the poore
Dye for pure colde and hunger at their doore.
We keede fat oxen, they marmosets keepe,
We keede fat kiddes, lambes, and good sheepe:
And they keede hawkes, apes, horse and houndes,
And small is their ioy saue here within our boundes.
We bring them butter, egges, cheese and wooll,
Tankerdes of milke and creame fleeting full:
All maner fleshe, and all their whole liuing,
Without our labour truely they haue nothing.
We are the keepers of wethers and fat hogges,
And they of the Citie keede birdes and great dogges.
Nowe iudge Amintas, which of these seemeth thee
Of moste aduauntage and moste nobilitie.

Amintas

If by our labour proceedeth more riches,
And moste aduauntage, as seemeth truth doubtles,
Then this I meruayle that they of the Citie
Haue so great plentie, and we necessitie:
The cause can not I call to my remembraunce,
Wherof proceedeth their store and aboundaunce.

Faustus

The cause I tolde thee, what wouldest thou haue more,
By kraude and kalhood haue they so mikle store.
Seest thou not playnly howe they of the Citie
Dayly deceyue our poore simplicitie.
With what crueltie against vs they rage,
By falle oppression or fayre fayned language.
They thinke it pleasure that sorowe on them hap,
By gloked wordes to take vs in a trap:
The moste of them all count it an almes deede
Vs heardes to kraude, this is a gentle meede:
For them we labour in heate, colde, winde and rayne,
And kraude and disceyte they pay vs for our payne.
With mindes and tonge they study and they muse
Both day and night vs heardes to abuse:
Their wit and body all whole do they apply,
For vs poore wretches to study pollicie:
And after their kraude, gile and deception,
Then do they laugh vs vnto derision.

Amintas

Howe came thou to knowledge of this enormitie,
And of these maners of them of the Citie:
My selfe there wonned, and there was conuersant,
Of some of these thinges yet am I ignorant.

Faustus

Thou could not perceyue well their enormitie,
Perchaunce thy maners did with their like agree:
There seldome is seene great contradiction,
Where men accordeth in disposition.
No fault with Noziens is blacke difformitie,
Because all the sort like of that fauour be.
So could thou not see their vices nor them blame,
Because thine owne like was filed with the same.
But howe I knewe them nowe shall I tell to thee,
While I brought butter to sell to the Citie,
And other vitayle, I sled milke to crye,
Then had I knowledge with an appotecary:
Of him I learned much kalhood and practise
Not to the purpose the same to exercise:
He could make plasters and newe commixtions,
In valour scant worth a couple of onions,
Yet solde he the same as it were golde so dere,
Namely if happened any infective yere.
I was acquainted with many an hucster,
With a costardmonger and with an hostler.
This thiefe was crafty poore people to begile,
None like I suppose within a dosen mile:
Among all his other kraudes and his crimes
He solde one bottell of hey a dosen times.
And in the Otes could he well drop a candle,
Well knewe he howe his gestes for to handle.
And in the same Inne there dwelled a piety prim,
She could well flatter and glose with him and him.
And necke a measure, her smirking gat her sale,
She made ten shillinges of one barell of ale.
Whom she begiled in pottes, she was fayne
To win them with fresh and paynted looke agayne.
And as I remember, her name was wanton Belle,
Who leaft with her dealt he thriued not the lesse.
What needeth more processe, no craft of the Citie
Is, but is mingled with kraude and subtiltie:
Saue onely the craft of an Apoticary,
That is all kraude and gilefull pollicy,
But all these would sweare that they were innocent,
Or they to the Citie did first of all frequent.
There learned they theft and kraude to exercise,
And man of nature is moued soone to vice.
Some be also which spend their patrimony
Which was to them lefte by their olde auncestry
On queanes, baudes, in riot and dronkennes,
Their name defiling, despising all goodnes.
With cost and paynes such bulyly labour,
Seeking for shame and death before their houre.
Say where is custome of fornication,
Incest, aduoutry and defloration,
Forcing of women, murther and rapine,
Discorde and brauling and liuing like to swine:
Malice, enuy, and all iniquitie
Do these not reygne in middes of the Citie?
All newe abusion prouoking men to sins
Had first beginning among the Citezins.
Where dwell great princes and mightie gouernours,
Their like despising for to haue vayne honours.
Capitaynes, souldiers, and all like company,
Which put for money their life in ieopardie.
These dwell not vplande, but haunt the Citie,
Poore herdes fight not but for necessitie,
For libertie, life, and Justice to vpholde,
Towne dwellers fight for vayne honour and golde.
We fight our frendes and houlholde to defende,
They fight for malice to riches to ascende.
Our cause and quarell is to maynteyne the right,
But all on selfe will without reason they fight.
They seeke by woundes for honour and riches,
And driue the weakest to hardest busines.
O blinde souldier, why settest thou thy hart
For a vayne stipende against a mortall dart.
By thousand perils thou takest thy passage,
For small lucre renning to great domage.
Their sweete life they geue for a poore stipende,
And oft lese they both, and heauen at the ende.

While

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While some contendeth and fighteth for his wage,
His life he spendeth, then farewell aduauntage.
What is more foolish or liker to madnes,
Then to spende the life for glory and riches?
What thing is glory, laude, prayſing or fame,
What honour, reporte, or what is noble name?
Forsooth nought but voyce of witleſſe commontie,
And vayne opinion subiect to vanitie.
Processe of yeres, reuoluing of reason
Bringeth all theſe soone in obliuion.
When life is faded all theſe be out of sight,
Like as with the Sun departeth the day light,
They all be fooles which meddle with the sea,
And otherwise might liue in their owne country.
He is but a foole which runneth to tempeſt,
And might liue on lande in suertie and in reſt.
He is but a foole which hath of good plentie,
And it disdayneth to vse and occupy.
And he which liueth in care and wretchednes
His heyre to promote to landes and riches
Is moſte foole of all, to spare in misery,
With goodes and landes his heyre to magnifye.
And he which leaueth that thing for to be done
Unto his daughter, executour or sonne,
Which he him ſelf might in his life fulfill,
He is but a foole, and hath but litle skill.
But all theſe sortes within the citie be,
They want of wiſedome, and sue enormitie.
And also the youth in dayes festiuall
Do nought but folowe their luſtes beſtiall.
The weeke they vse them in worldly bulynes,
The Sunday serueth to folowe viciousnes.
What time the shoppes be cloſed all and shit,
Then is the market with Thais, beale and kit,
On hyeſt dayes such ware is namely solde,
For nought it wareth, if it be once olde.
Upon the Sonday when man should God honour,
Left in good labour, enlued is errour.
Oft time the olde freer that wonned in Grenewitch
Againſt such folyes was boldly wont to preache:
He saide: where baudes and their abusion
Were wont to abide in one vile place alone,
Nowe are they sprinkled and sparkled abrode,
Like wise as shippes be docked in a rode,
That harde is to knowe good women from the ill,
By ill example good are in doubt to spill.
Baudes be suffered so where them luſt to bide,
That the ſtrete fadeth vpon the water side.
Cate, Gill, Mably, Phillis and feate Jeny,
Because of the citie nowe can not get one peny.
Vile Thais was wont in angles for to be,
Nowe hath she power in all the whole citie.

Amintas

Thou palleſt measure (Faustus) by God anowe,
Thou sayeſt of malice right well perceyue I nowe:
Mitigate thy minde and tonge, for it is shame
Men of the citie thus largely to blame.
What man is faultleſſe, remember the village,
Howe men vplondish on holy dayes rage.
Nought can them tame, they be a beaſtly sort,
In sweate and labour hauing moſte chiefe comfort.
On the holy day alloone as morne is paſt,
When all men reſteth while all the day doth laſt,
They drinke, they banket, they reuell and they ieſt,
They leape, they daunce, delpiſing eaſe and reſt.
If they once heare a bagpipe or a drone,
Anone to the elme or Oke they be gone.
There vse they to daunce, to gambolde and to rage,
Such is the cuſtome and vſe of the village.
When the ground reſteth from rake, plough and wheles
Then moſte they it trouble with burthen of their heles.
To Bacchus they banket, no feaſt is feſtiuall,
They chide and they chat, they vary and they brall,
They rayle and they route, they reuell and they crye,
Laughing and leaping, and making cuppes drye,

Fauſtus

What, stint thou thy chat, theſe wordes I defye,
It is to a vilayne rebuke and vilany.
Such rurall solace so plainly for to blame,
Thy wordes sound to thy rebuke and shame.

Amintas

Not so frend Faustus, I spake it but in game,
Agayne to the Citie returne in Gods name.

Fauſtus

Yet of the citie mo fooles tell can I,
Which wene to number the ſterres in the sky,
By them ſuppoſing eche deſteny to tell,
But all be fooles that with this matter mell.
Yet be they madder which fixe their intent
To learche the nature of God omnipotent:
And dare be so bolde to set their mortall sight
On incomprehenſible and pure immortall light.
Our fayth is better, for they of the citie
Beleue by reason with great difficultie:
Or they will beleue, they braule with argument,
Playne ſpeeche ſuffiſeth vs people innocent.
Againſt Sir Samplon their quarell they defende,
We alke no queſtion, and vſe not to contende.
We light the aultars, and many candels offer,
When they of the towne ſcantly make a proffer:
Their fayth is feble, our fayth is sure and ſtable,
They dare be bolde with doctours for to bable:
A worldly merchaunt nought knowing of doctrine,
Because of his coyne counteth his reason fine.
Truſt me Amintas, no force who heareth me,
The coyne and cunning doth not alway agree:
For some be that haue plentie of that one,
Which of that other haue litle part or none.
What should the fooles that dwell in the citie,
Or we seeke to knowe of Gods priuitie.
If it were nedefull the Godhead for to knowe
To ſimple wretches here on the grounde alowe:
It is in the power of God omnipotent
His very preſence to vs to repreſent.
But ſith his knowledge is incomprehenſible,
Why seeke fooles for thinges impoſſible?
And ſith God will be vnknowen vnto vs,
Why should thing mortall of endleſſe thing diſcuſſe?
And rurall people in almes do excell
Aboue all the sort which in the citie dwell.
We geue wooll and cheeſe, our wiues coyne and egges
When freers flatter and prayſe their proper legges.
For a score of pinnes, and needles two or three
A gentle cluner two cheeſes had of me.
Phillis gaue coyne because he did her charme,
Euer ſith that time leſſe hath she felt of harme.
Yet is in the citie a number incurable,
Pleaders and brokers a foule and shameſull rable,
Merchauntes of Juſtice, hunters of riches,
Cratchers of coyne, delayers of proceſſe,
Prolonging cauſes, and making wrong of right,
And right of playn wrong, oppreſſing law with might,
Jaylers of Juſtice, their curſed couetice
Watreth the plantes of crueltie and vice.

Amintas

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Amintas

This haue I proued by playne experience,
But tell me Faustus, what causeth this offence.

Faustus

The roote and the grounde of this misgouernaunce
Is fauour, rewarde, and wilfull ignoraunce:
When coyne or fauour once dimmed hath the sight,
Adue all Justice, in prison layde is right.
Yet be in townes a rable fraudulent,
Murtherers of people, and free of punishment:
Vaunting and boasting them selfe of medicine,
And naught perceyuing of science and doctrine:
If they be fetred with ringes and with cheynes,
Then may they handle and touche priuy veynes:
Name all diseases and sores at their will,
Auoyde of cunning, of reason eyther skill:
Such ride on mules, and pages by their side,
But if they had right, on alles should they ride.
As touching rulers of all the commontie,
The more that they haue of hye authoritie,
Of libertie, will, and singuler pleasure,
So much the more poore people they deuour.
The boundes some time wont holdes for to keepe,
Be nowe wilde wolues, deuouring all the sheepe:
Rulers be robbers, and piliers be pastours,
Gone is the guiding of godly gouernours.
O where be rulers mayntayners of Justice,
Where be subduers and slakers of all vice?
Where be the frendes of mercy and pitie,
Sometime well ruling, not spoyling the Citie?
Where be chaste rulers, iust, meke, and liberall?
Chaunged is fortune, death hath deuoured all.
The worst remayneth, gone be the meke and iust,
In stede of vertue ruleth free will and lust.
Where be the fathers right worthy an empire,
Of whom men countped gay tales by the fire:
Sometime with tales, and otherwhile with songe,
So dryuing away the winter nightes longe.
Alas Amintas, nought bideth that is good,
No not my cokers, my taberre nor my hood.
All is consumed, all spent and worne be,
So is all goodnes and wealth of the Citee.
The temples pilled do bitterly complayne,
Poore people wayle, and call for helpe in vayne:
Poore widowes sorowe, and children fatherlesse
In vayne bewayle, when wolues them oppresse.
Sinne hath no scourge, and vertue no rewarde,
Who loueth wisedome, his fortune is but harde.
Counsell and cunning nowe tumble in the dust,
But what is the cause? lawe turned is to lust:
Lust standeth in stede of lawe and of Justice,
Whereby good liuing subdued is by vice.

Amintas

I tell thee Faustus, this hastynes of thee
Passeth the boundes of right and honestie.
All men thou blamest by wrath and hastynes,
As all Citizens were full of viciousnes.
What man remember, some liue in innocence,
Some in the Citie be partlesse of offence.

Faustus

I am not angry, I say but veritie,
Heare me Amintas one clause with breuitie:
As many wyes as breede in Irelande,
And as many Gripes as breede in Englande,
As many Cuckowes as sing in January,
And Nightingales as sing in February,
And as many whales as swimmeth in the sea,
So many be there in Cities of good men.

Amintas

A good man is geason, not ealy to be founde
On lande or in Citie, or ouer all the grounde,
Many thinges longe vnto a perfect man,
Alike that of Cobrus, declare the truth he can:
Badnes encreaseth and ouer fast doth growe,
Goodnes and vertue in comming vp be slowe.

Faustus

Thou art mad I trowe, so many foes haue we,
As dwell Citizens in all the whole Citie.
They clip vs, they poule vs, they pill vs to the skin,
And what they may get that thinke they well to win.
To theft they constrayne vs, I tell thee by all halowes,
And after by and by they sende vs to the galowes.
Therfore it is reason, if ought of theirs hap
Or come to our clawes, it priuily to trap.
They vs oft disceyue, disceyue we them agayne,
Deuise we slily, gile, subtiltie and trayne.
But this Amintas to me is greatest grieke
And doubt, for it is ill stealing from a thieke.
If it be secrete, we may it well denye,
If it be knowen, excuse it craftyly.
Priuy felony though it be vsed longe
Is not called theft, but iniury or wrong.
All that they haue within these townes playne,
Is our harde labour, sore trauayle and great payne.

Amintas.

Nowe thou exceedest the marke of equitie,
Thou pallest reason Faustus I tell to thee.

Faustus

When then Amintas, haue patience a while,
Towne dwellers vices doth all the earth defile.
The ayre is corrupt by their enormitie,
These summer stormes whence come they, tel thou me:
Lightning, great windes, fluds, hayle and thunder,
I well remember, oft time the ground here vnder
Right sore hath quaked, and caused houses fall,
Vice of the Citie is roote and cause of all.
The Sunne in mid day oft time hath lost his light,
In like wise the moone in season of the night.
Both hath bene blacke, or els red as bloud,
This signe Amintas pretendeth vs no good.
Why growe the weedes and cockle in the corne?
Why is hey and grasse oft times all forlorne?
Why lose we our seede, our labour and expence,
Whence commeth murrayne and grieuous pestilence?
All these procedeth by mad enormitie,
And corrupt maners of them of the Citie:
And worse is like yet afterwarde to fall,
If they not reforme their liuing bestiall.
Whence came the furour of hardnes and battayle,
Which causeth widowes their spouses to bewayle,
Which bringeth with it all kinde of misery,
As theft and murther, great death and penury?
Forsooth in Cities this furour first began,
To the confusion of many a doubty man.
The Citie is well and ground originall,
Both first and last of deadly euils all:
Bred in the Citie was cruell Licaon,
Bred among herbes was good Deucalion.
Among Shepherdes nourished was Rhenus,
And also his brother the mightie Romulus.
The cause of the flud in Citie first began,
Whereby was wasted nere euery beast and man.
Our Lorde destroyed fiue Cities for outrage,
Reade where for sinnes he wasted one village.

I trowe

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I trowe when the world with fire wasted shall be,
The cause shall proceede and come of some Citie.
What shall I touche the sauour and the stinke
Which is in cities, of gutter and of sinke:
There men be choked with vile and deadly sent,
Here haue we odour of floures redolent:
I coumpt me happy which won in the village,
As vndefiled with citizens outrage.

Amintas

Haue done nowe Faustus, lay here a straw at
Fill we our bely with cruddes that is best.
Leaue we the Citie and all ciuill outrage,
Nowe is it season to turne to the potage,
After our diner is best in my minde
The rest to declare, if ought remayne behinde.

FINIS.

Thus endeth the fifth and last Eg-
loge of Alexander Barclay, of the Citi-
zen and the man of the countrey.

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